TIME
In Deep.

TIME
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4 | Conversation
6 | For the Record

The Brief

News from the U.S. and around the world

7 | At the **U.S.-Mexico border,** families remain in limbo

10 | A resurgence of **measles** in the U.S. and Europe

13 | Remembering **Aretha Franklin**

14 | TIME with … defending U.S. Open champion **Sloane Stephens**

20 | **Stargazing** in Vermont

The View

Ideas, opinion, innovations

25 | Pope Francis, sexual abuse and the future of the **Catholic Church**

27 | Ian Bremmer on the state of the **United Nations**

30 | Susanna Schrobsdorff on **older family** and hard choices

31 | How to raise **optimistic children**

32 | Jon Meacham on the parallels between **Trump, Nixon and McCarthy**

Features

All the President's Men
After two top allies are found guilty in court, Trump's presidency enters its most treacherous phase yet *By Brian Bennett* **34**

Trade Warrior
Former Hillary Clinton ally Peter Navarro is now Trump's most influential trade adviser *By Molly Ball* **42**

On Afghanistan's Front Line
A firsthand account of a Taliban onslaught and the U.S. military's response *By W.J. Hennigan* **48**

Firebrand of Brazil
Far-right presidential hopeful Jair Bolsonaro wants to take his country back *By Matt Sandy* **58**

The Real Power of Fake Pills
A new method of placebo treatments gains legitimacy *By Alexandra Sifferlin* **64**

The World's Greatest Places
100 destinations to experience now **71**

Time Off

What to watch, read, see and do

99 | Troye Sivan, a **pop icon** for the digital generation

103 | New **parenting** books

104 | The summer of the **documentary**

106 | New **romantic comedies** satisfy a craving

108 | 9 Questions for actor **Jason Bateman**

On Aug. 16, residents of Ghazni view buildings damaged during a recent Taliban siege

Photograph by Emanuele Satolli for TIME

ON THE COVER: *Illustration by Tim O'Brien for TIME*

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Conversation

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT ...

PERFECTLY SERENA Sean Gregory's Aug. 27 cover story about Serena Williams earned high marks close to home: the tennis star's husband, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, tweeted that he was "so proud." Many readers found inspiration in Williams' life. "Serena sounds like a wonderful, loving, human mom," tweeted actor Olivia Wilde. Endurance racer Amelia Boone of San Jose, Calif., praised the article's depth: "While I admire athletes for their accomplishments, I've always respected them more for being human," she tweeted. Also on Twitter, @Ishikamohan described Williams' story of coming to terms with her own perceived shortcomings as "so familiar." And MaryKay Hartung of Palm Harbor, Fla., was glad to see the "remarkably positive" Williams on the cover instead of "yet another" politics story.

> ***'Her struggle mirrors the struggle of so many women.'***
>
> **APRIL BLAINE,** Hilliard, Ohio

NEW HOPE FOR ALZHEIMER'S The Mayo Clinic and Alzheimer's research advocates shared Alice Park's Aug. 20 story on a study that suggests lowering blood pressure could help lower the risk of cognitive decline. George Vradenburg, chair of the nonprofit UsAgainstAlzheimer's, tweeted that, while more research is needed, the results "suggest opportunities" for treatment. David S. Benedict of Williamsburg, Va., whose wife has mild cognitive impairment, called for broadening the discussion even more. "There needs to be more attention paid to … integrative and functional medicine," he wrote.

> ***'Maintaining healthy blood pressure is important for brain health, too.'***
>
> **AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION,** on Twitter

BEHIND THE COVER This week's cover might seem a little familiar. To illustrate our story on the mounting troubles facing President Trump, we commissioned longtime TIME collaborator Tim O'Brien to create a third installment in his series of Oval Office covers, this time featuring a flooded office with the President floating above the waterline. "The question of the third cover was if he would still be at his Resolute desk or not," says O'Brien, a Brooklyn-based artist whose work has appeared on more than two dozen TIME covers since 1989, depicting subjects ranging from the Catholic Church to Osama bin Laden. "I felt that it was too comical or perhaps morbid to see him sitting there. But to have him at the top suggests he's still fighting despite the deepening issues."

GREAT PLACES For international readers, this week's cover introduces a new TIME franchise: the World's Greatest Places. We commissioned Studio MUTI, a South African firm, to produce artwork featuring some of our 2018 picks. "It was fascinating to research all of the places as we took a digital journey around the globe," said designer Clint Campbell.

bonus TIME history

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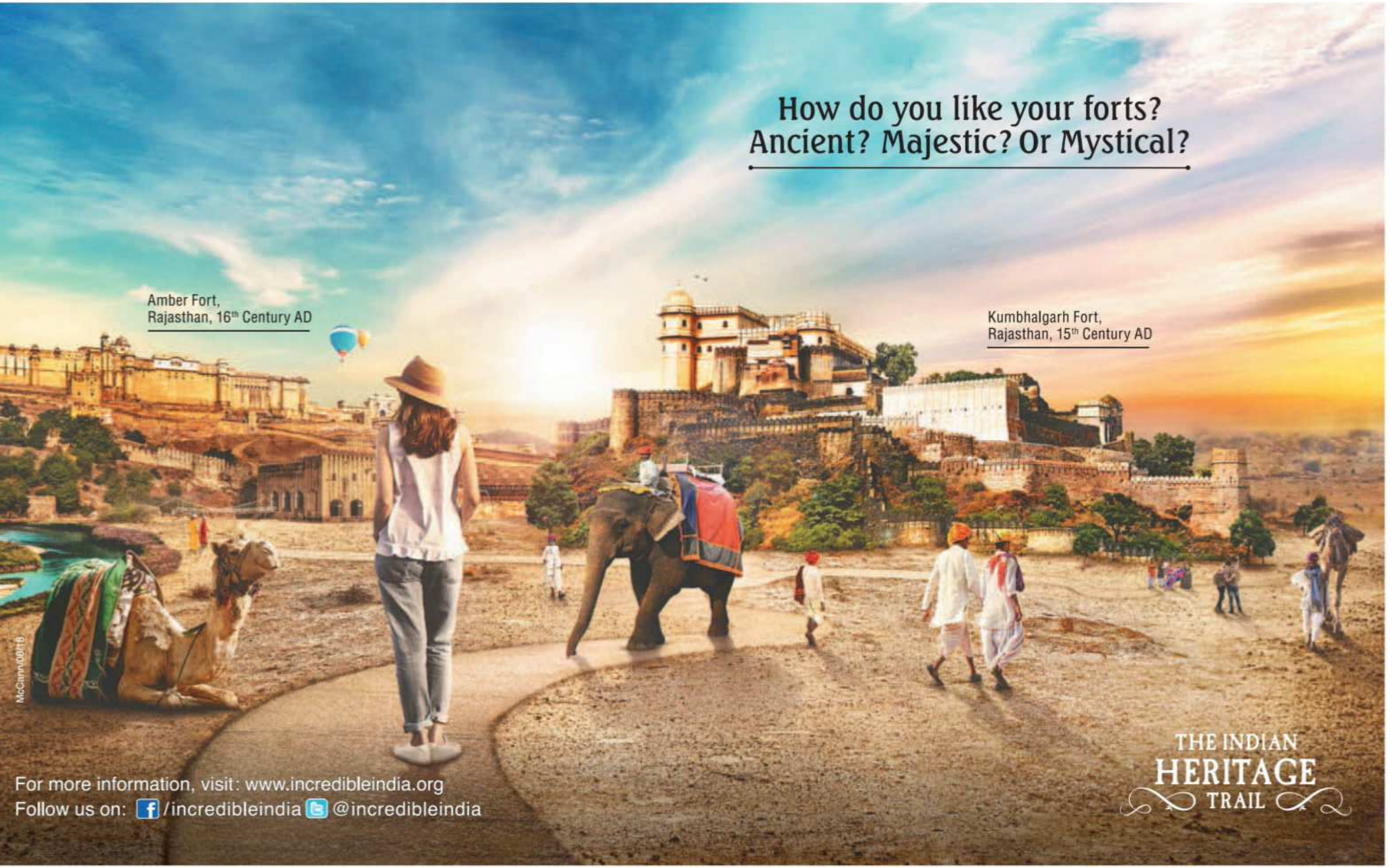
Incredible India

How do you like your forts? Ancient? Majestic? Or Mystical?

Amber Fort,
Rajasthan, 16th Century AD

Kumbhalgarh Fort,
Rajasthan, 15th Century AD



McCann/08/16

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THE INDIAN HERITAGE TRAIL

For the Record

‘We accept the moral obligation of Germany, in whose name terrible injustice was committed under the Nazis.’

HEIKO MAAS,
German Foreign Minister, on the U.S. deportation of former Nazi guard Jakiw Palij to Germany; the move came after a 14-year effort to push Palij out of his New York City home

‘Truth isn’t truth.’

RUDOLPH GIULIANI,
President Trump’s personal lawyer, discussing on NBC’s *Meet the Press* whether Trump should testify to special counsel Robert Mueller; he later explained that he meant the statement as a description of a he-said, she-said situation, not “a pontification on moral theology”

‘A definite maybe.’

CHELSEA CLINTON,
former First Daughter of the United States, on whether she plans to run for public office in the future

‘I HAD A BABY, I CARRIED A BABY, AND NOW I’M STILL WINNING AWARDS!’

CARDI B,
rapper, accepting the Best New Artist prize at the MTV Video Music Awards and responding to critics who had said she was “gambling” by having a baby at that stage in her career

38

Number of platinum certifications the Eagles album *Their Greatest Hits 1971–1975* has now earned, overtaking Michael Jackson’s *Thriller* as the best-selling album of all time, according to the Recording Industry Association of America

312 to 1

The CEO-to-worker compensation ratio in 2017, according to a report on the CEOs of America’s top 350 publicly held companies by the Economic Policy Institute

‘We showed no care for the little ones; we abandoned them.’

POPE FRANCIS,
on 1,000-plus children molested by more than 300 Pennsylvania priests over seven decades, according to a state grand-jury report

Peatos
Cheetos accuses snack food Peatos of trademark violations

PETA
New Animal Crackers box shows animals without cages, after pressure from the group

3,200

Estimated age, in years, of cheese found by archaeologists in a tomb south of Cairo

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN FOR TIME

SOURCES: ASSOCIATED PRESS; NEW YORK TIMES

The Brief

THE LONG WAIT Asylum seekers at the gates to the U.S. face barriers even at official crossings like this bridge in Matamoros, Mexico

INSIDE

GREECE MOVES ON FROM THE LARGEST FINANCIAL-ASSISTANCE PACKAGE EVER

CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD FACE MEASLES, BUT NOT ALL FOR THE SAME REASONS

ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS DESMOND TUTU REMEMBERS "GLOBAL CITIZEN" KOFI ANNAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR TIME

IMMIGRATION

At the U.S. border, a view from the bridges

By Maya Rhodan/Matamoros, Mexico

FOR MOST, THE GATEWAY INTERNATIONAL Bridge functions as it should, allowing people to get between the U.S. and Mexico. But on a hot Sunday afternoon, a dozen migrants at the mouth of the bridge weren't getting anywhere at all. They had been told, once again, to wait.

"For three days we have been sleeping on the floor and they have been telling us the same thing," one of them, a man named Mbella, told TIME. "But every day, someone else goes and we remain here."

At a press conference the next day, Aug. 20, President Trump once again touted the border wall he has promised supporters. "The wall is getting longer and taller and stronger each and every day," he said, even though construction has not begun. The President's characterization of the physical wall was false, but his Administration has effectively erected an invisible one.

It is built, in part, from situations like the one at the bridge, which illustrates the problem, both logistical and theoretical, with this kind of barrier. The practices that Trump praises for keeping out criminals also punish those who are trying to follow the rules.

Case in point: for months, Administration officials have said that those who wish to enter the U.S. to seek asylum should do so at an official port of entry, a place like the Gateway International Bridge between Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas. There, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is equipped to screen visitors and process such claims. When the Administration's "zero tolerance" border policy prompted outcry, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said that families who arrived through the ports wouldn't be separated. But to those who follow instructions, the process can seem slow at best and arbitrary at worst. Advocates say the wait exposes migrants to danger, but CBP says in fact safety is the reason it is limiting entry into crowded border facilities. "No one is being denied the opportunity to make a claim of credible fear or seek asylum," a spokesperson told TIME in an email.

The renewed attention to the southern border has raised concerns among advocates about the barriers some migrants face even when attempting to cross legally.

"We're seeing an increase in people showing up at the ports," says Astrid Dominguez, director of the ACLU of Texas Border Rights Center, "but we're not seeing them get processed in a timely manner."

AS THE SUN SET over the Rio Grande, Kevin, 17, stood with his face pressed against the fence where the U.S. and Mexico meet on the Hildago-Reynosa Bridge, another nearby port of entry. "They haven't told me anything about when they might let me in," he said. The teen, clutching a bag that held his only belongings, said he was fleeing violence in Guatemala. After about 15 minutes of conversation with TIME, he was waved through.

A woman named Dianellis, 29, said she and her husband had sold everything they had in order to flee persecution in Cuba. They had been waiting to cross the Gateway International Bridge for a week.

As for Mbella, 38, he and his wife left behind five children in their native Cameroon. He said they fled to the Americas after experiencing a violent clash with government officials.

Those who spoke to TIME at the bridges had varied stories but shared a determination to cross. Some understood a bit of what could happen to them next. How long could it take to get processed? How likely was it they'd be detained? And if they did ultimately apply for asylum, it remained to be seen whether their stories would qualify. The regulations governing such matters are complicated, and the vast majority who apply are rejected. But in theory, their fates would be decided at immigration courts, not at the border.

Some in the Administration have made no secret of the fact that their goal is not to address undocumented border crossing but to curtail immigration, period. Those affected include asylum seekers. In June, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said victims of domestic and gang violence can no longer qualify for asylum, and immigration judges under Trump have been finding fewer cases of the "credible fear" that is key for obtaining asylum. The New York *Times* reports that the Administration is considering eliminating asylum processing at ports of entry altogether. And Trump has suggested sending people back to their home countries immediately, "with no judges or court cases."

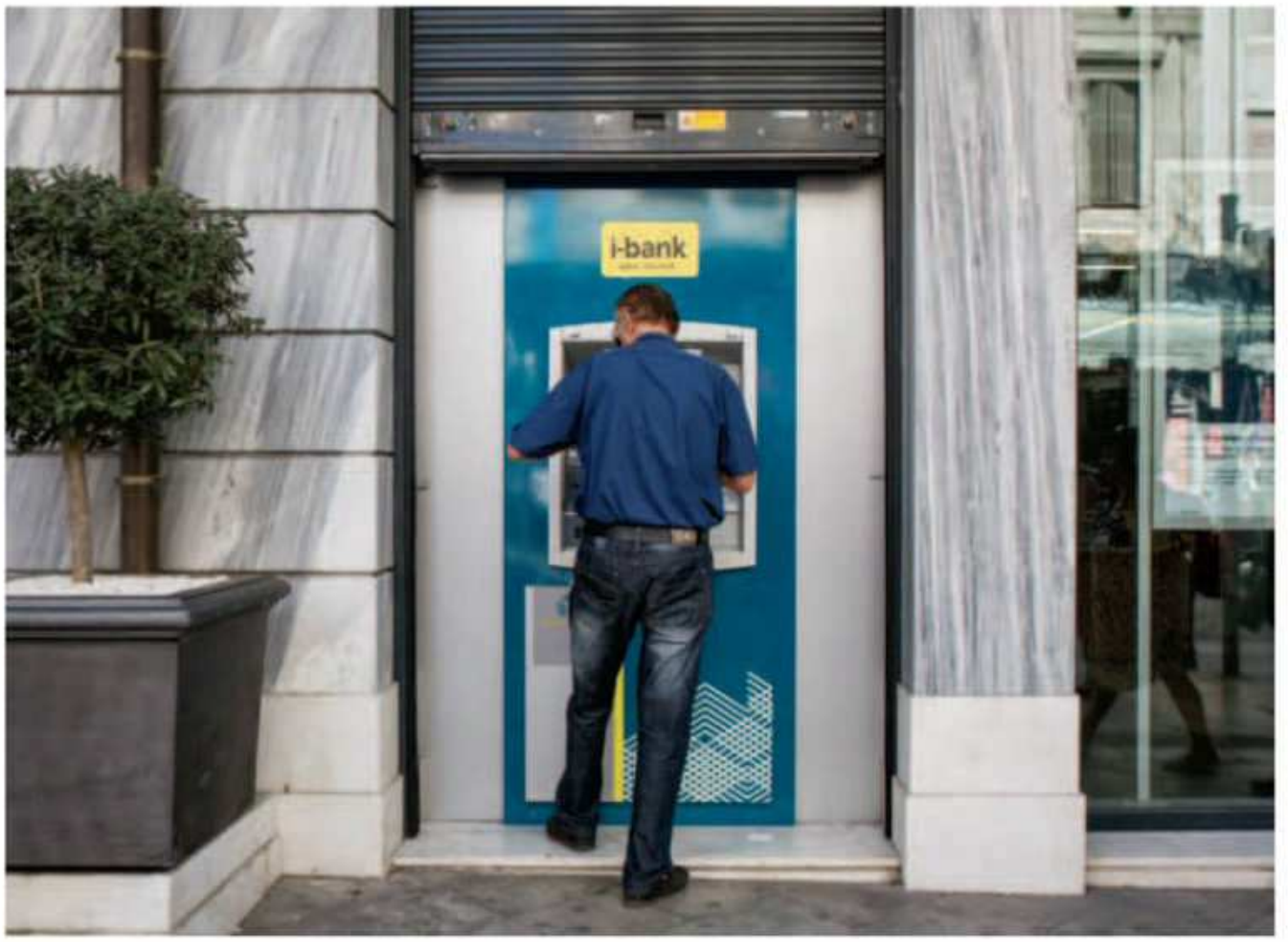
Meanwhile, the Mexican end of the bridges is in the state of Tamaulipas, which the U.S. State Department says is as risky for American travelers as Syria. Most of those crossing the border are unaccompanied minors and family units. Many claim to face hardship or violence at home. Before they can get to the places where those claims can be heard, they must make it across a bridge. —*With reporting by Ilana Panich-Linsman*

'When somebody comes in, we must immediately, with no Judges or Court Cases, bring them back ...'

President Trump, in a June 24 tweet

TRUMP: GETTY IMAGES; GREECE: SOCRATES BALTAGIANNIS—PICTURE-ALLIANCE/DPA/AP

The Texas Tribune *and TIME have partnered to track the family-separation crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border. This story was reported as part of that partnership.*



A man stands at an ATM in Athens. On Aug. 20, the last bailout program for Greece came to an end

THE BULLETIN

Greece enters post-bailout era, but has little else to cheer

AFTER EIGHT YEARS OF AUSTERITY AND European financial support, Greece officially exited its third bailout program on Aug. 20. For the first time since 2010, the country can "stand on its own," according to the chair of the euro-zone bailout fund. "This is a day of liberation," said Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, emphasizing that Greece must not forget the lessons of the crisis. But after years of political and social upheaval, starting afresh isn't so easy.

DEEP IN DEBT The global financial crisis of 2007–08 hit Greece hard. In 2010, the country revealed that it was running a deficit of over 14%, rather than the 4% it had misreported. Lenders' confidence plummeted. With creditors unwilling to keep the country ticking, Greece was forced to request emergency loans from the E.U., the European Central Bank and the IMF. Those bailouts amounted to some $360 billion—the largest financial assistance package in history—and came with the condition that Greece would reduce welfare spending, embark on privatization and increase taxes.

STATE OF RUIN As Greece tried to prevent itself from falling into bankruptcy, its citizens suffered. The economy has shrunk by more than a quarter since 2010, and unemployment—which hit 28% at the peak of the crisis—is still at 20% (the euro-zone average is 8%). Youth unemployment is about 40%, and many jobs are temporary or low-paying.

BLEAK FUTURE Greece's reliance on bailout money is over, and its economy grew 1.4% last year. But it now faces the challenge of paying back its loans. The conditions imposed by creditors aren't over yet: they require that Greece run a budget surplus of 3.5% of GDP until 2022, and then an average of 2.2% until 2060. So the government has been forced to raise taxes yet again. Some analysts fear this will stifle growth and risk pushing Greece back into crisis. Tsipras has promised "prudence and responsibility." Despite pressure to improve the lives of ordinary Greeks, they're unlikely to see improvements anytime soon.

—BILLY PERRIGO

NEWS TICKER

1 million flee record floods in India

The heaviest rains in almost a century **forced over a million people into relief camps in the Indian state of Kerala.** Flooding has killed at least 410, and early estimates put damage costs at nearly $3 billion. Other nations offered aid, but India generally doesn't accept such help.

U.S. inmates stage national prison strike

Prisoners across the U.S. went on strike on Aug. 21 **to protest what they are calling "modern-day slavery."** They've said their conditions, such as being forced to work for far below minimum wage, are a human-rights issue. During the strike, which is expected to last nearly three weeks, inmates will not work or spend at commissaries.

North and South Koreans reunited

Eighty-nine mostly elderly South Koreans went to North Korea to reunite with relatives **they hadn't seen since the Korean War, over 60 years ago.** More than 130,000 South Koreans have entered a lottery to take part in the brief meetings since 2000, but many have died without being chosen.

NEWS TICKER

California Republican indicted over funds

The Justice Department on Aug. 21 charged Representative Duncan Hunter **with using more than $250,000 of campaign funds for personal expenses.** He is the second sitting Republican Congressman, after Representative Chris Collins, to be indicted in August.

Iran, Russia online meddling revealed

Facebook said on Aug. 21 that it had taken down 652 accounts, pages and groups after discovering they were linked to **targeted influence campaigns by Iran.** The revelation came after Microsoft said it had thwarted an operation by Russian hackers targeting conservative political groups and think tanks in the U.S.

Trump rolls back coal regulations

The Trump Administration announced on Aug. 21 that it would scrap and replace **Obama-era regulations on coal-fired power plants.** The new proposal has been hailed by the coal industry, but Democratic states and environmental groups pledged to fight the changes in the courts.

GOOD QUESTION

Why is measles returning to some places and not others?

BY NOW, MEASLES OUGHT TO BE OPTIONAL. As long as parents are conscientious and governments are competent, no child has to contract the sometimes fatal disease again. But across Europe and in the U.S., that's not what's happening.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were more than 40,000 cases of measles—including 37 deaths—across Europe in just the first six months of 2018. That's a huge jump: in all of last year, there were 23,927 cases, and only 5,273 the year before. More than half of those 2018 cases were found in Ukraine, while six other countries (Serbia, France, Italy, Russia, Georgia and Greece) have each topped 1,000 cases. The U.S. numbers are less alarming—107 cases, across 21 states and the District of Columbia—but they too represent an uptick over the past few years, if still a long way from the 667 cases in 2014.

The question remains why, more than half a century after the first measles vaccine was licensed, we still must battle these epidemic wildfires. Just as the numbers vary from place to place, so do the answers.

In the U.S., much of the problem can be traced to a fraudulent 1998 study by Andrew Wakefield, a British doctor who has since been stripped of his license to practice medicine. After he linked the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine to autism, the lie was spread in the U.S. by celebrities like Jenny McCarthy. Although 20 years of study have established that no such link exists, vaccination rates plummeted in the U.K.—as well as in the U.S. and elsewhere—and have not fully recovered.

In Ukraine, the problem is of more recent vintage. In 2008, the nation's vaccination rates were as high as 95%—the level needed to establish herd immunity, or the ability of a well-vaccinated public to protect the unvaccinated handful by denying the virus any carriers. By 2016, the number was down to just 31%, partly as a result of war and unrest. Making things worse, by law, government-purchased vaccines have been available only to children, leaving adults exposed.

In Italy, a bad situation—more than 2,000 cases from January through June—was made worse in August, when the upper house of Parliament halted mandatory vaccinations for kids entering nursery school or pre-K. The move was seen as an anti-establishment gesture by a populist government, but it came at a public-health price.

Across Europe, WHO is working with governments to step up immunization rates. Ukraine especially is making progress, with a push to vaccinate all children when they reach the prescribed age and to double back and get the kids who had been missed. Free vaccines are now also available to at-risk adults.

Nearly all vaccines work—but only if adults make smart decisions for dependent children. When the adults fail, no matter where that happens, it's the kids who pay.

—JEFFREY KLUGER

MARRIAGE

Matrimonial mistakes

Winona Ryder revealed that she might have married Keanu Reeves, after a wedding in their 1992 film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* used a real priest. Here, other nuptial mishaps. —*Abigail Abrams*

WRONG NUMBER
In September 2017, a man in London mistakenly sent a message to a woman he did not know on WhatsApp. Despite the accidental intro, they went on their first date that night and got married three months later.

DOWN IN FLAMES
A bride in Brazil in May wanted to make a grand entrance by helicopter, but things went wrong when it crashed into a field. Miraculously unhurt, she walked down the aisle shortly after stepping away from the burning chopper.

REACTION VIDEO
A man visiting New Mexico's Sandia Mountains in June met a couple on his way to the top and was asked to film their proposal. The story went viral after he mistakenly filmed his own happy reaction instead.

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DIED
Al-Qaeda's chief bombmaker **Ibrahim al-Asiri,** in a drone strike last year, U.S. officials announced on Aug. 20. Al-Asiri was known for creating bombs that could slip past airport security.

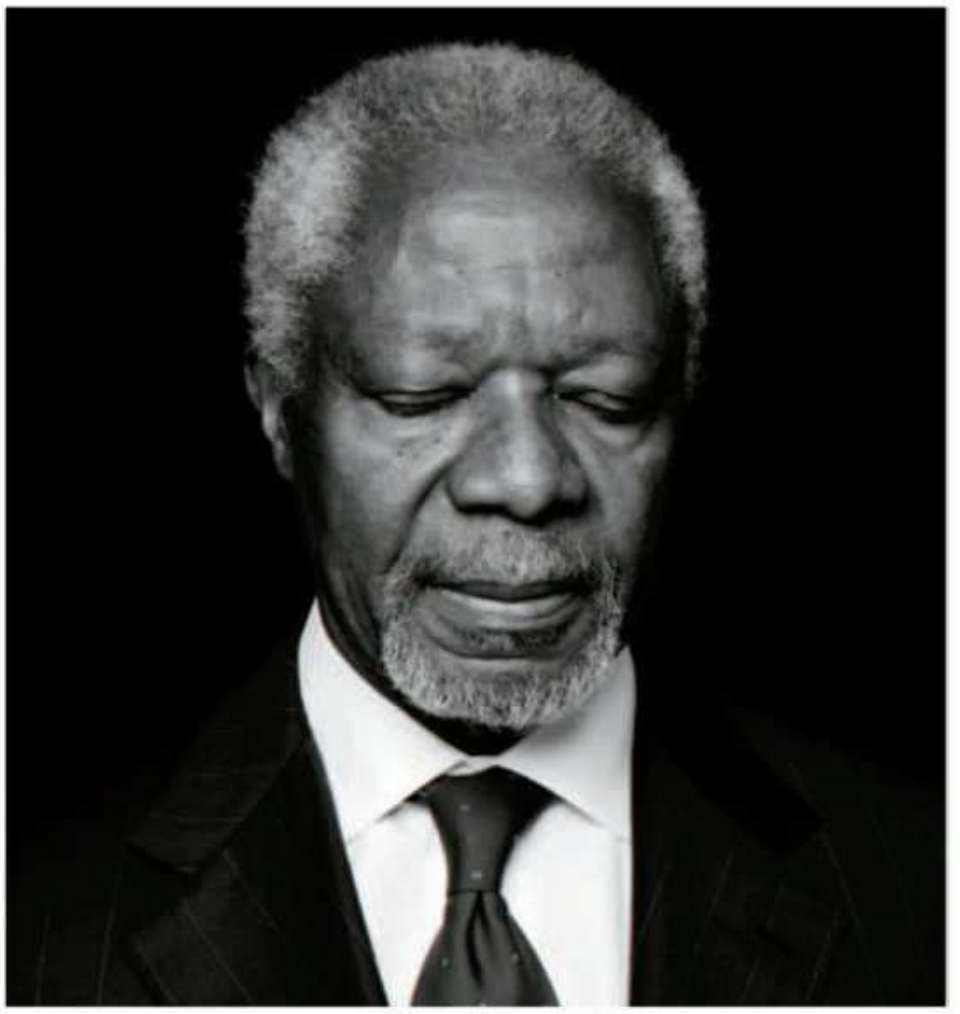
CLASHED
Neo-Nazis and counterprotesters during an Aug. 18 march in Berlin on the 31st anniversary of the suicide of Nazi leader Rudolf Hess. At least one police officer was injured.

GATHERED
Hundreds of people to **oppose the Catholic Church's influence** over Argentine politics, in Buenos Aires on Aug. 18. The protest came in the wake of the country's decision not to legalize abortion.

APPROVED
The **first generic version of EpiPen,** by the FDA, after Mylan raised the price of the lifesaving drug device sixfold since buying it in 2007.

PAID
A settlement of **$380,000,** by Asia Argento to a man who accused her of assault. Argento, a key figure in the #MeToo movement, denies the allegations, which police in California said on Aug. 20 they were investigating.

WON
The **all-around title at the U.S. Gymnastics championships,** by Simone Biles, 21, on Aug. 19, making her the oldest woman to take the title since 1971.



Annan, former U.N. Secretary-General, in 2013

DIED

Kofi Annan
Global citizen

By Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

KOFI ANNAN'S DEEP WELL OF GRACE, HUMILITY AND CALM energy set him apart. Such was his seemingly boundless vigor and the gravitas he exuded, that his death, at the age of 80 on Aug. 18, shocked all who knew and loved him.

A career diplomat originally from Ghana, Annan led the U.N. from 1997 to 2006, one of the most difficult periods in its history. He crisscrossed the world in an effort to bridge divides after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. One can only imagine the pressure he was under, yet it never affected his demeanor.

After he retired from the U.N., his peacemaking continued through the efforts of his foundation and, later, as chairman of the Elders, an independent global leaders' group. He understood on a visceral level that true peace resides within us all; that justice and human rights are not far-flung concepts for war-torn countries, but reside in our homes and our communities; and that child marriage is as abhorrent as bombmaking.

Over the years I came to regard Annan as a wiser, younger brother. Five years ago in Cape Town, he spoke of the need for societies to "embrace diversity as a source of strength." The fact that Annan was a product of Africa did us especially proud, but he could not be defined by his Africanness. He embodied the global citizen. For him, there was no *them,* no *other*—just *us.*

Tutu is a cleric and human-rights activist and preceded Annan as chairman of the Elders

FOUND

Mollie Tibbetts
Student turned symbol

MOLLIE TIBBETTS, 20, WAS last seen on July 18 going for a jog near her hometown of Brooklyn, Iowa. The missing University of Iowa student came to national attention after her community helped raise a nearly $400,000 reward for tips that led to her safe return. But when the search ended with the discovery of her body, interest in her story took on a new dimension.

After authorities said on Aug. 21 that they'd charged an undocumented immigrant in the case, Tibbetts' murder drew the attention of politicians. At a rally, President Trump linked her death with immigration laws that are a "disgrace"—even though studies show that undocumented immigrants don't actually commit crimes at higher rates than U.S. citizens. The narrative was further complicated by court documents filed on Aug. 22 stating that the suspect, Cristhian Rivera, 24, was working legally in Iowa. If Tibbetts remains in national headlines as election time approaches, the tragic case could also be remembered as a touchstone in the nation's immigration debate.

—GINA MARTINEZ

ANNAN: ANOUSH ABRAR—13 PHOTO/REDUX; TIBBETTS: COURTESY POWESHIEK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Aretha Franklin sang her way through history

By Stephanie Zacharek

WHEN ARETHA FRANKLIN SANG, OUT POURED THE sun and the moon. Her voice was optimism shaded with sorrow, joy tempered by the understanding that nothing in life can be perfect—but above all it was a sound that both absorbed and radiated light. To hear it is to feel bathed in that light. Franklin died on Aug. 16 at age 76, and her death closes an era. She belongs not just in the pantheon of great soul singers, but in the realm of great artists period: John Coltrane, Elvis Presley, the Beatles, Billie Holiday—with them, she helped give shape to the second half of the 20th century. To tell its story in sound would be impossible without Aretha. Her warmth—her light—was explosive.

Franklin was born in Memphis in 1942, although she grew up, and lived most of her life, in Detroit. Her father was C.L. Franklin, a charismatic Baptist minister and civil rights activist. Her mother Barbara was a gifted gospel singer. Franklin grew up singing in the church, and then on the gospel circuit, with an often grueling schedule. Her father began managing her career when she was a teenager, first landing her a deal with Detroit's tiny J.V.B. Records and later a contract with Columbia, where she made nine records.

Franklin cut most of her greatest songs after she made the move to Atlantic Records in 1967, beginning with the first song she recorded for the label, the astonishing "I Never Loved a Man (the Way I Love You)." Her version of Otis Redding's "Respect," also from that first Atlantic album, was both a celebration and a warning, an assertion of both racial pride and ball-of-fire womanhood. It was a song that felt personal but also embraced a community; its power could reach anywhere.

The string of songs that spring to mind at the mere mention of Franklin's name seems endless: "Chain of Fools," "Son of a Preacher Man," "Think," "Daydreaming." (Those last two were written or co-written by Franklin herself, who, as well as being a superb pianist, had a gift for songcraft.) In 1980, she switched labels again, to Arista. Her 1985 *Who's Zoomin' Who* was one of the finest albums of the decade, a set of fiercely affirmative songs that felt so modern and free, you'd never imagine they'd have come from a music veteran who was edging toward her mid-40s.

HEILEMANN/CAMERA PRESS/REDUX

Franklin, in 1968: She shattered the limits of what could be done with a song

FRANKLIN EMERGED FROM the multiple paths forged by Holiday, Nina Simone and Mahalia Jackson. And like Sam Cooke, a family friend, she melded gospel with pop music so seamlessly that it's now hard to think there was ever a time when the two ran on parallel, if often crisscrossing, paths. Without her there could have been no Donna Summer, Chaka Khan or Whitney Houston (whose mother Cissy was one of the Sweet Inspirations, who often sang backup for Franklin); nor would there be a Janelle Monáe, a Rihanna or a Beyoncé. Franklin was both a pioneer and a connecting link to traditional American music, looking ahead every minute without ever losing sight of where she came from. She rewrote the rules, and shattered the limits, of what could be done with a song, even numbers that, as recorded by others, already seemed like a done deal. She turned the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" into an eloquent honky-tonk lament, changing the lyrics to the first-person, shifting the action—and the pure loneliness described in the song—onto herself. She was an expert at both expressing and hiding. Song by song, Franklin drew us closer. Her double helix of intimacy and mystery only made us want more.

You can see all of Franklin's instincts at work, that assurance, that skill, in the footage of her performance of "America (My Country 'Tis of Thee)" at Barack Obama's Inauguration in 2009. She reinvents even this song, one most of us have heard hundreds of times, turning it into an acknowledgment that even in a nation built on bloodshed and suffering, there is a vast capacity for good. No monarchies in this country—we don't believe in that stuff. Yet for a time, this sweet land of liberty was graced with a queen. She sang her way through one of our nation's most charged and challenging eras, and we followed the sound of her voice. She taught us so much, just because it was pure joy to listen. ◻

U.S. Open champion **Sloane Stephens** is set to defend her title in New York—and defy her critics

By Sean Gregory

YOUTH TENNIS CLINICS, LIKE THE ONE REIGNING U.S. Open champion Sloane Stephens is holding for some two dozen children in Washington, D.C., on this stifling summer afternoon, tend to be lighthearted affairs known in the trade as a hit and giggle. Pro player lobs a few shots to the kiddies, waves to the cameras, signs some autographs. Sponsor gets exposure, star gives back, kids pick up some tips—everyone goes home happy.

Stephens, however, doesn't like such "foo-foo"—her words—affairs. "Hustle!" she yells at a group of 11-year-olds not moving fast enough for her liking. "Come on, pay attention!" she barks when eyes wander. "Hey, hey, hey," Stephens says when some kids balk at her command to run sprints on the indoor courts. "You guys are going to have an attitude when you didn't finish what you started?"

During a break, one girl walked to the sideline. "They said she was going to be nicer," she griped to her mother.

A few hours later, Stephens is sitting sideways on a hotel lobby couch and laughs when I relay the young girl's words. "I want to see you hit, I want to see your strokes, I want to see you run," Stephens, 25, says of her tough-love approach. "If I'm going to spend an hour-and-a-half of my time, we're going to get sh-t done."

Lately, no other American woman not named Williams has gotten more done on the tennis court than Stephens. Last September in New York, she became the first American player—male or female—besides the Williams sisters to win a major tournament singles title in 14 years. That she did it after missing nearly a year because of injury and about one month removed from being ranked 957th was particularly striking, as was her reaction. "Oh my God," Stephens was caught mouthing on TV before receiving the $3.7 million winner's check. When asked then if her first Grand Slam title made her want more, Stephens spared all cliché: "Of course, girl. Did you see that check that lady handed me?"

The title raised hopes that Stephens could be the heir to the Williams' mantle, and she has since given more reason to believe it. In March she won the Miami Open, a top tournament one notch below the four majors, and she reached the final of the French Open in June. She'll start the U.S. Open on Aug. 27 as the third-ranked player in the world.

STEPHENS QUICK FACTS

Upset city
With her victory at the U.S. Open in New York last year, Stephens became just the second unseeded woman to win the title since 1968. Kim Clijsters, the 2009 winner, is the other.

Buzzing
After winning the Open, Stephens says she had 1,600 text messages.

School sweethearts
Stephens first met her boyfriend, Toronto FC and U.S. national soccer team player Jozy Altidore, when she was in fifth grade.

Every highlight, however, seems to be accompanied by a baffling flame-out. After winning the Open, Stephens lost eight straight matches. She was eliminated in the first rounds of the Australian Open and Wimbledon. Three days after her clinic in Washington, she lost to an unseeded player at the Citi Open in D.C.

Inconsistency has dogged Stephens throughout her career, and it casts a long shadow over her title defense in Flushing Meadows. Who will take the court in Queens? The future of American tennis, with electrifying speed and a smile made for Madison Avenue? Or the enigmatic should-be superstar who's prone to unforced errors? "It's not going to be easy," says Stephens, discussing her state of mind before the Open. "But at the end of the day, it's all an experience, right?"

STEPHENS ANNOUNCED HER ARRIVAL in 2013, when, at 19, she upset Serena Williams in the Australian Open quarterfinals. She lost in the semis, but no matter: many tennis fans were instantly drawn to her potential and charisma. Her mother Sybil Smith is a school psychologist and the first black woman to be named a first-team All-American collegiate swimmer; her father John Stephens was a former NFL running back who died in an auto accident in 2009. Smith split with Stephens when their daughter was 18 months old. In 1994, John Stephens pleaded guilty to rape, and was facing a separate sexual-assault charge at the time of his death. Stephens reconnected with her father a few years before his death and didn't learn about the assault cases until after. She chooses to remember the man she got to know. "I wish he could come to a tournament and see my play now," says Stephens. "I know he's there. He's watching."

The high expectations following her upset of Williams weighed on Stephens. "I felt really disappointed when I wasn't delivering, and that kind of brought me down more than it would have normally," she says. Among tennis cognoscenti, she developed a reputation for indifference. "All you can hope at this point is that Sloane Stephens has a hard time sleeping tonight," the broadcaster Mary Carillo said during Stephens' 6-1, 6-0 loss to Caroline Wozniacki at the 2014 Sony Open in Miami. After managing to win four tour events in 2015 and '16, Stephens withdrew from the '16 U.S. Open because of a foot injury.

Surgery and recovery kept her off the tour for 11 months. Stephens didn't fare well in her return, at Wimbledon, but impressed at the tune-up tournaments before the Open. Soon, she was enjoying the perks of being a Grand Slam champion: an appearance on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!*, pictures with Magic Johnson, lucrative endorsement deals with Nike, Mercedes-Benz,

JUERGEN HASENKOPF—BPI/SHUTTERSTOCK

Colgate and Built with Chocolate Milk. She walked the ESPYs red carpet, and won Best Female Tennis Player honors.

Following the Open, Stephens kept entering tournaments despite nursing a sore knee, reluctant to miss more time after her long layoff. The results were dismal: eight straight defeats, including in the first round of the Australian Open. The courtside chatter turned, again, to whether Stephens had what it takes to be great. Tennis legend and ESPN analyst Chris Evert, for one, publicly questioned if Stephens had the desire to win more Grand Slams.

Stephens takes the criticism in stride. "Everyone was, 'Oh my God, what U.S. Open champion loses eight matches in a row?'" she says from the couch in the Washington hotel. "I was like, 'Me!' It's going to be fine."

Stephens has a coolness that can be mistaken for ambivalence. But she has always managed her career on her terms. In late 2017, she finished the requirements for a bachelor's degree in communications from Indiana University East's online program. She didn't mind missing practice to tend to her studies, and ignored whispers she was loafing on the tennis court. "Bro, I've got to graduate," she says of sticking to her timeline, no matter the consequences. "This is important, O.K." She's now pursing an online MBA.

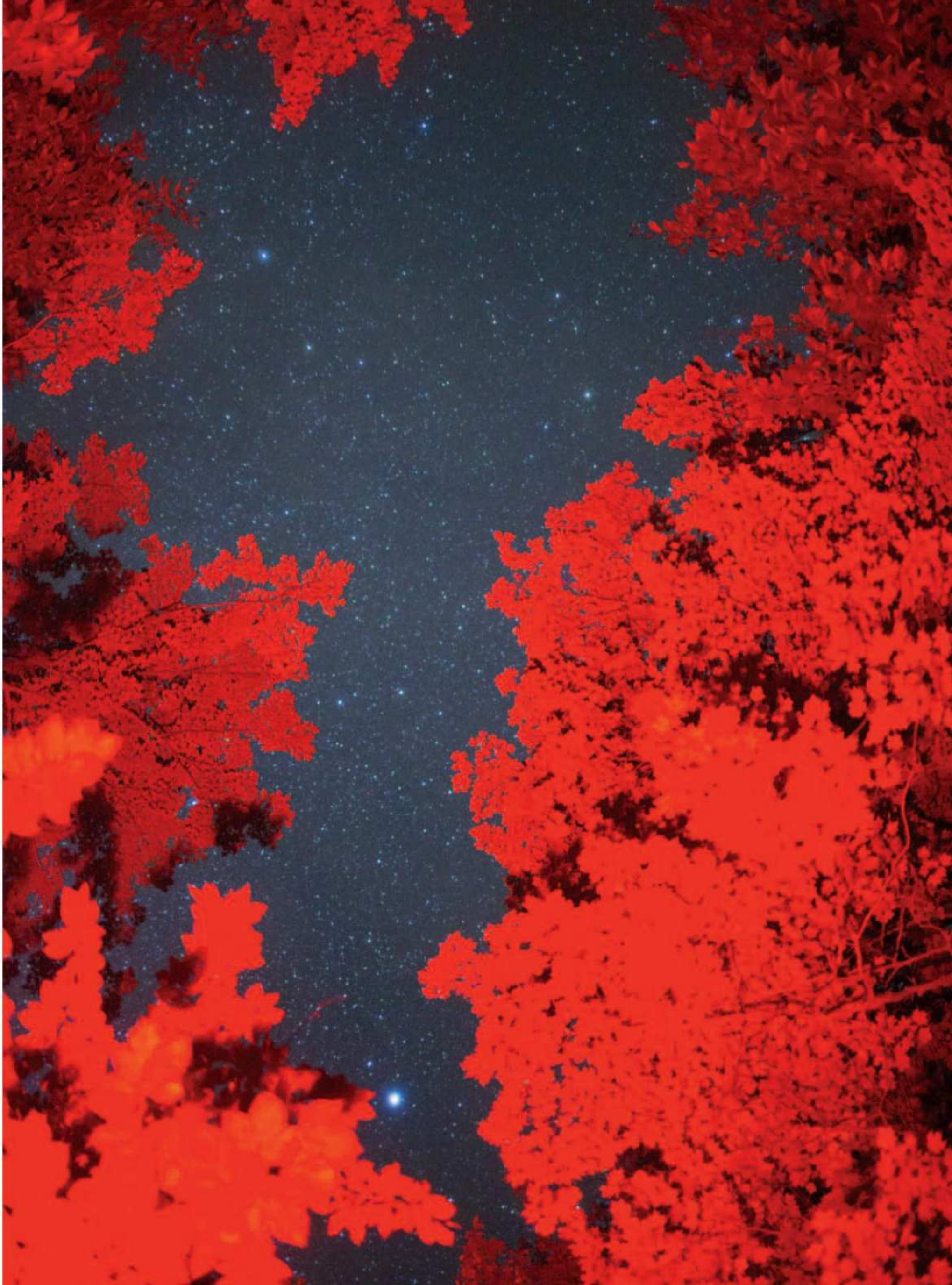
'I've been pretty harshly judged for always doing what I wanted to do.'

SLOANE STEPHENS, on her doubters

Stephens is defiant about sticking to her chosen path. "I've been pretty harshly judged for always doing what I wanted to do," she says.

Some critics are coming around. Evert says she now sees determination in Stephens' eyes. It helps that she's regained her winning form, reaching the finals of the Rogers Cup in Montreal just a few weeks before the start of the Open. Stephens knows she'll face additional pressure as the defending champion. But she insists she's ready to handle it.

"I'm in a good place," Stephens says before leaving the hotel for dinner with her coach. "People say, Oh, you're inconsistent, you're this, you're that. Whatever. When I retire from tennis, I'll be able to look back and say I did it the way I wanted to do it. I was just playing. And I was just making sure I was happy along the way." ◻



SPACE

Finding a dark-sky paradise on a tiny Vermont hill

By Jeffrey Kluger
Photographs by Robert Ormerod for TIME

NEARLY EVERY SPOT ON EARTH IS, EFFECTIVELY, a planetarium. Wait for the sun to go down, hope for a cloudless sky and look up. The show's been running every night for 4.5 billion years now.

But for the best stargazing, some places are better than others. There's the great observatory atop Mauna Kea in Hawaii, 13,796 ft. above sea level; there's the University of Tokyo Atacama Observatory in Chile, at 18,500 ft. And then there's Stellafane, a cluster of permanent telescope observatories near a bubble-gum pink clubhouse on Breezy Hill in Springfield, Vt.

At just shy of 1,300 ft., Stellafane can't compete with high-altitude spots—but it has charm to burn, as was evidenced Aug. 9 to 12, when stargazers from around the world converged for the annual Stellafane Convention, many with their own telescopes. Edinburgh-based photographer Robert Ormerod was among those who made the trip. The images he captured reveal why the party has been going on for close to a century.

It was on Aug. 17, 1920, when a group of 15 men and one woman gathered in a Springfield basement to learn how to grind telescope mirrors, a skill taught by Arctic explorer and lay astronomer Russell W. Porter. In 1923, the group established itself as Springfield Telescope Makers Inc. That same year, the clubhouse was built, and Porter dubbed it Stellar-fane, Latin for "Shrine to the stars." Later, it was condensed to Stellafane.

Ever since, the club and community have worked to protect Breezy Hill's astronomical appeal. Mostly, that means keeping it as free as possible from light pollution, which can spoil the show. When a new prison was approved for construction in the town in 1999, Stellafane, along with the International Dark-Sky Association, successfully lobbied the state and prison designers to minimize light spill. Dark-sky policies apply to visitors too. You can forget about campfires, and after the evening talks on Fridays and Saturdays, car headlights are permitted for only half an hour.

But as Ormerod's pictures attest, it's all worth it. The vast majority of us will never visit space, and the few of us who have ventured beyond Earth's atmosphere have never gone more than a quarter-million miles away. The whole of the universe—billions of light-years wide—lies beyond. It's our great fortune that the stars and planets and moons and nebulae send their otherworldly light to us. There are uncounted places on the planet to stand and appreciate that beauty. Few are better than atop Breezy Hill. □

The sky, left, during Stellafane's star party. According to a 2016 study, 80% of the world's population lives in places where light pollution spoils the nighttime view of the heavens. The International Dark-Sky Association is establishing protected areas called "dark sky reserves" to combat that.

Above, Zane Landers, 15, from Connecticut, with one of his homemade telescopes. Many visitors to Stellafane bring their own instruments. Others grab a look when they can through one of the permanent telescopes on-site. Still others rely on binoculars or the naked eye.

Clockwise from top left: The historic Stellafane clubhouse in Springfield, Vt.; Dee and Roy Diffrient of Monkton, Md., during their 25th year attending the star party; a detail of the Porter Turret Telescope, which was built by Stellafane members; Joe Bergeron, an author and illustrator from Endwell, N.Y. "I normally don't seek out a lot of human company," Bergeron says, "but Stellafane has an air of peace and goodwill that I enjoy."

Opposite page: LeeAnna Goulette, 8, and Kaitlyn Goulette, 10. The sisters were encouraged by their parents to develop an interest in astronomy.

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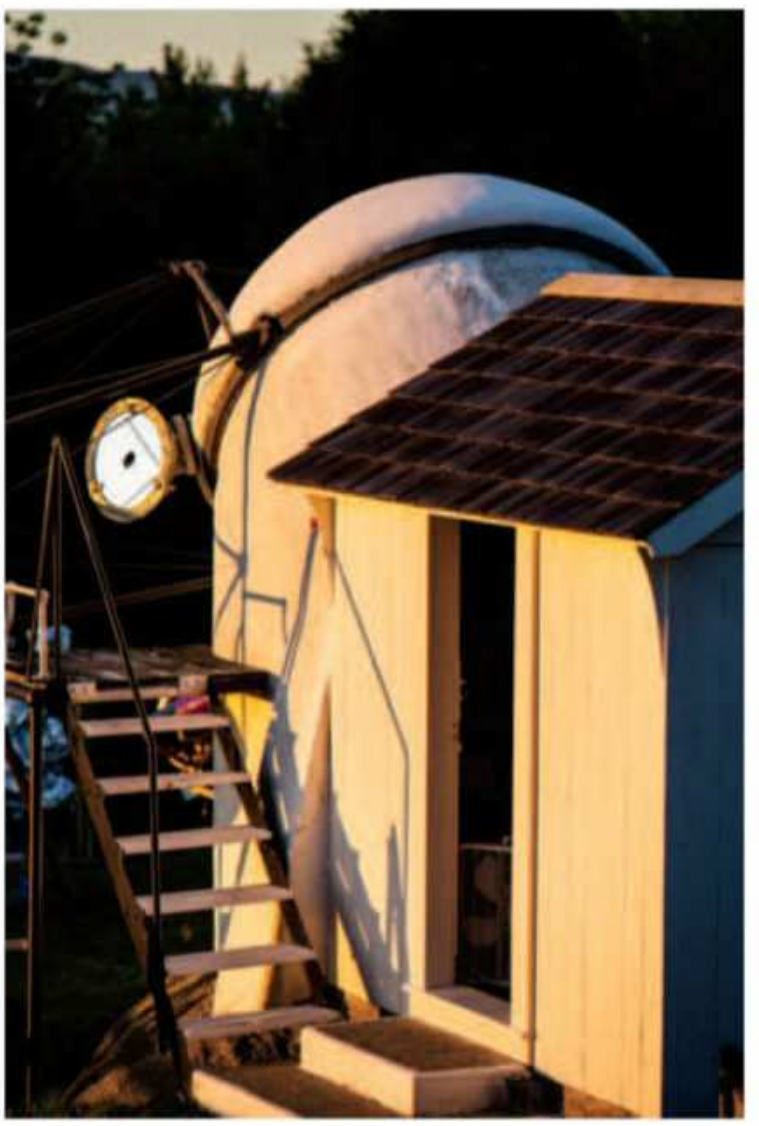

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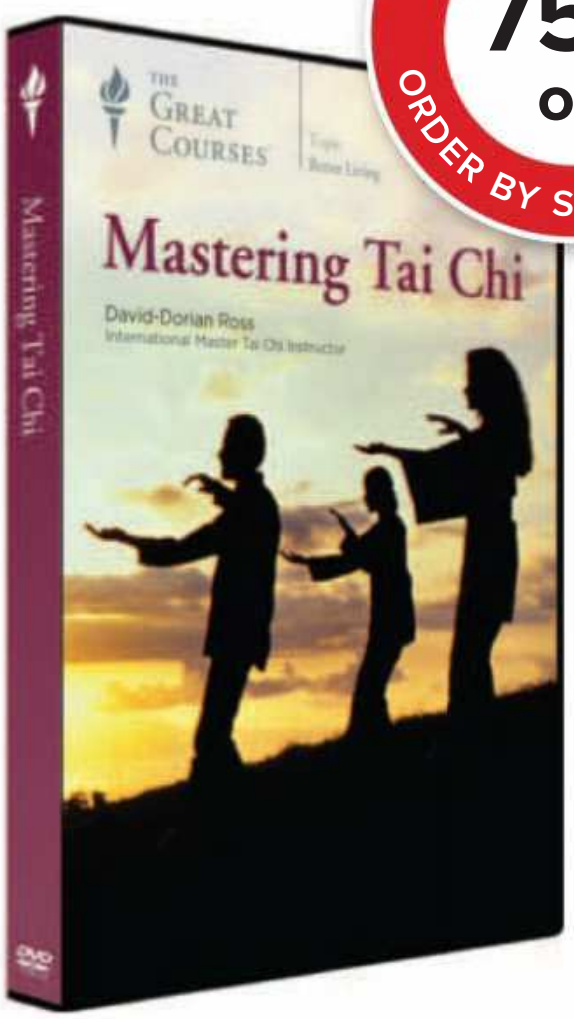

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The View

RELIGION

THE POPE'S TRUE POWER

By Paul Elie

"Witch hunts" is what prominent cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga of Honduras called the Boston *Globe*'s and other outlets' reporting on decades of sexual abuse by Catholic priests in 2002, after the coverage led to accusations of a cover-up. He is now one of Pope Francis' closest advisers. But they were not witch hunts. They told the truth

INSIDE

WHAT THE UNITED NATIONS IS WORTH IN TODAY'S WORLD

THE DISTRESS OF END-OF-LIFE DECISIONMAKING

TRUMP EVOKES MCCARTHY AND NIXON

and exposed the perils of unchecked power exercised by another cardinal, Boston's Bernard Law. That reporting led to Law's resignation, the removal and prosecution of priestly offenders, and a promise from U.S. bishops to install a "zero tolerance" policy on sexual abuse.

Sixteen years later, the phrase *witch hunt* calls to mind President Trump's assault on the free press, the rule of law, and our constitutional system of checks and balances and the separation of powers. What happens when those curbs on executive power are weak or nonexistent? Too often we look to places like Vladimir Putin's Russia to answer that question. Instead, we should look to the Catholic Church; we can see the consequences in the broken lives of thousands of victims and the anguish of our Catholic neighbors—because the crisis of priestly sexual abuse is a crisis of executive power run amok.

HISTORICALLY, A BISHOP was a priest drawn from an area's Catholic people, and the Pope—the bishop of Rome, successor to Jesus' disciple Peter—was considered the "bishop of bishops." But the papacy gained power until the Pope was an absolute monarch. Then, in 1959, Pope John XXIII called the world's bishops to Rome for a council. Known as Vatican II, that assembly affirmed the authority of the bishops under the Pope, empowering them to lead the faithful according to regional needs and customs around the world.

Pope John Paul II changed that. Elected in 1978, he turned those bishops into municipal upholders of the power of Rome. Over three decades, he made appointments based on candidates' unambiguous orthodoxy and loyalty to the organization, rather than holiness, wisdom, imagination or grasp of the local situation. He built a class of subordinates to the church's chief executive.

So when the U.S. bishops faced charges of sexual abuse and cover-up, they struck back through assertions of executive power. They accused the press of anti-Catholic bias, prosecutors of interfering in church affairs and victims' lawyers of greed and opportunism. They acted as if they—not preyed-upon youth—were the victims.

After the scandal of 2002, the bishops actually entrusted themselves with addressing the crimes—ones in which they were implicated—by organizing a review board under their supervision and promising to report abuse claims to law enforcement. The 60 million–plus member American Catholic populace had no formal say in this. We went along with it and hoped for the best. Is it any wonder that the crisis of priestly sexual abuse hasn't been dealt with?

Now there is talk of the need for profound reform of the church's structures of governance. But while it's a worthy long-term goal, that rebuilding would take decades, and it is unlikely to take hold in the deeply undemocratic church at a time when checks and balances are under strain in robust democracies.

The best structure for accountability, then, remains the one in place—that which has shaped the crisis from the exposé in Boston to the grand-jury report in Pennsylvania: the press, prosecution and the people. A free press pursues claims of priestly sexual abuse aggressively—and adversarially, if need be. Victims take their claims to the media, the police and the courts (not just the church)—and the perpetrators are exposed and prosecuted. The Catholic people, and good people generally, fully express our sense of betrayal and feel the pain of the victims all over again.

This arrangement, though, doesn't give us much hope for change. But there is a fourth part of all of this: the Pope.

The historic power of the papacy means that change in the church often comes, finally, at the prompting of the Pontiff—as in, through the exercise of executive power. By calling for Vatican II, John XXIII sparked crucial reforms. John Paul II was personally committed to repairing the church's tortured relations with the Jewish people, and his commitment led to change. The church needs something similar from Pope Francis.

The current Pontiff's record on priestly sexual abuse is far from sound. But his willingness earlier this summer to change his position on priestly sexual abuse in Chile in a matter of weeks—from angry defensiveness to an admission of wrongdoing to welcoming to victims in Rome—shows what is possible when a Pope commits to doing the right thing rather than standing blindly by his subordinates. And his Aug. 20 letter—personal, aggrieved, but short on specifics—suggests that he, too, is searching for a way forward.

Pope Francis could appoint successors to the active bishops who figure in the grand-jury report, installing fresh leaders for the good of the church. He could institute a Year of Repentance for Priestly Sexual Abuse, akin to the Year of Mercy he called in December 2015. He could urge victims to come forward to law enforcement without fear of statutes of limitations. He could meet journalists on their own turf for an open session—no question refused—and urge them to keep up their reporting on the church. He could welcome prosecutors and victims' attorneys to Rome and thank them for doing the work of scrutiny and calling priests to account.

For all his power in the church, a Pope's power in the world is that of leading through gesture and symbolism. It is greater than executive power.

As John Paul, at the Wailing Wall, paid homage to over 5,700 years of Jewish heritage in 2000, so too could Francis bend the knee to democratic traditions of separation of powers, accountability and a free press. It would not be enough to expunge the evil of priestly sexual abuse. But it would affirm what events have already made clear: when it comes to priestly sexual abuse, the Catholic Church is incapable of fixing itself.

› *Pope Francis*

ALESSANDRO DI MEO—POOL/EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Elie, a senior research fellow at Georgetown's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, is writing a book on art, religion and controversy in the 1980s

THE RISK REPORT

In a G-zero world, we need a robust U.N. more than ever

By Ian Bremmer

AFTER THE DEATH on Aug. 18 of former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, it's an opportune moment for a closer look at the organization he led. How valuable is today's U.N. in a G-zero world with a startling lack of global leadership? Is the institution still a guiding force for good?

The Security Council charged with overseeing international peace and safety remains dysfunctional, but that's hardly a new story. The willingness of the five permanent members to veto the plans of others and protect their allies is decades old. The G-zero problem was evident in the Security Council long before it became obvious everywhere else.

But the U.N. leadership still makes a difference. The current Secretary-General, António Guterres, has won well-deserved praise for a willingness to speak plainly on tough issues even if it aggravates powerful member states. He has sharply criticized the government of Myanmar, an ally of China, for crimes against Rohingya Muslims. He said U.S. President Donald Trump's ban on immigrants from some Muslim countries "violates our basic principles." He has spoken of defense for Palestinians against U.S. ally Israel. In August, he used a visit to Nagasaki, Japan, to implicitly criticize both the U.S. and Russia for the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. And somehow he has helped the U.N. avoid (so far) the sort of destabilizing attacks that Trump has launched on NATO, the E.U. and other multilateral institutions.

Where the U.N. really proves its value, however, is in the work of its agencies. Peacekeeping operations in Africa, Asia, the Balkans and elsewhere prevent conflict where outsiders are reluctant to get involved. The U.N. Refugee Agency helps millions of displaced people. The World Bank provides grants, credits and low-interest loans to help poorer countries build the roads, bridges, ports, schools and hospitals they badly need.

The World Food Programme, funded entirely by donations, has fed tens of millions of hungry people globally. It trains large numbers of people to boost food security and nutrition standards and helps build clinics and health centers.

The World Health Organization is at the front lines of health crises, but it's also battling long-term to meet the U.N.'s health-related development goals. It has contributed to dramatic reductions in infant mortality, deaths of mothers during childbirth and fatality rates from HIV and malaria. UNICEF treats malnourished children and provides access to safe water, education, vaccines and mental-health care for millions of kids.

Whatever member states think about U.N. values, they should see the worth of an institution willing to ease so much human misery

In a world where so many countries are erecting barriers to people in need and building explicitly my-country-first foreign policies, who else will do these things?

Not every government seems to appreciate this. In July, Guterres notified each of the 193 member states that the U.N. faces an unprecedented cash-flow shortfall due to delayed contributions. Budget cuts are coming, he wrote in his letter, if member states can't be relied upon to pay their share promptly.

Whatever governments of the wealthiest members think about U.N. values, they should see the worth of an institution willing to police so many of the world's danger zones and ease so much human misery. "An organization such as ours should not have to suffer repeated brushes with bankruptcy," Guterres wrote. "But surely, the greater pain is felt by those we serve when we cannot, for want of modest funds, answer their call for help." ◻

SHORT READS

Highlights from stories on **time.com/ideas**

The courage to come out

Josie Totah, 17, who previously acted under the name J.J. Totah in films and TV shows, announced that she is transgender. She describes how people often assumed that she was a gay boy and how she had been too scared to correct them. **"I almost felt like I owed it to everybody,"** Totah writes. "But that has never been the way I think of myself."

Washington's lessons for Trump

George Washington was "far from being blessed with innate equanimity," writes former U.S. Senator John C. Danforth. But his "constant struggle to maintain the dignity that was his model for the presidency" contrasts sharply with what the American public now sees in the White House.

Studying the sounds of sex

"It can be a way to be focused … on what's going on for you," a therapist told Mara Altman, while she researched her new book, *Gross Anatomy,* to explain why she was naturally quiet during sex. The search for an answer turned a concern into empowerment.

Synergy in Motion

China helps bring opportunities to Africa through the alignment of diverse initiatives. By He Wenping

Following the 10th BRICS Summit in South Africa in July, the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in September will be another major event this year that draws attention to Africa and its strengthening ties with China.

FOCAC, established in 2000, has served as an important engine driving China-Africa collaboration. Since its inception, cooperation in various fields such as trade, investment, project contracting, development assistance, cultural exchanges, finance and security has made great headway. For example, China surpassed the United States to become Africa's largest trading partner in 2009 and has remained in that position for nine consecutive years. Africa is China's third-largest outbound investment destination and the second-largest overseas market for Chinese contractors. By the end of 2017, China's investment in Africa exceeded $100 billion, with more than 3,500 Chinese companies operating in African countries.

FOCAC summits in Beijing in 2006 and Johannesburg in 2015 both pushed China-Africa relations to new heights. At this year's Beijing summit, Chinese and African leaders will gather again to advance China-Africa relations. Notably, China is synergizing various platforms, such as FOCAC, BRICS and the Belt and Road Initiative, to promote African development.

Gateway to Africa

With the convening of the BRICS Johannesburg summit, the world's gaze was fixed on a mechanism that consists of emerging markets and developing countries, with members from Asia, Africa, Europe and South America.

When former chairman of Goldman Sachs asset management Jim O'Neil coined the BRIC acronym (Brazil, Russia, India and China) in 2001, it was merely a concept classifying the most promising and attractive emerging markets for multinationals, according to economic indicators, such as population, resources, market potential and GDP growth. It was not until eight years later that the leaders of these countries held their first summit.

The addition of South Africa in 2010 was indicative of other member nations' recognition of the African continent's rising status and development potential. Though a latecomer, as the only African country in the group, South Africa plays an increasingly significant role in facilitating BRICS-Africa collaboration.

South Africa constitutes nearly a quarter of Africa's GDP, but its economic aggregate is considerably lower than other BRICS members, at only about a quarter of Russia's, which itself was the lowest in the original BRIC group. Despite this, South Africa serves as a gateway for other BRICS countries to reach out to Africa.

South Africa's membership also shows the group's vision, which extends beyond the scope of economics to much broader areas, such as international politics and geostrategic structures. With the rapid rise of the collective strength of developing countries, and as their cooperation gains momentum, BRICS has now developed into a new platform for emerging markets and developing countries to strengthen multilateral consultation and joint action.

Thanks in part to growing economic and trade relations between BRICS and African countries, Africa has emerged from the international financial crisis and the wake of unrest in North Africa, and is in the process of rapid recovery. African economies and BRICS nations are committed to supporting each other through mutually beneficial programs.

The BRICS New Development Bank, whose mission is to boost infrastructure construction and green energy development, launched its Africa Regional Center (ARC) in Johannesburg in August 2017, a move that highlighted BRICS' determination to fulfill its commitment to Africa's sustainable development. In the future, the ARC will, with its financial capital and project development expertise, greatly contribute to African integration as well as industrialization and infrastructure upgrades on the continent.

At the Johannesburg summit, leaders endorsed the BRICS Partnership on New Industrial Revolution, an initiative jointly proposed by China and South Africa. It aims to hasten the process of replacing old economic drivers with new ones by working more closely together in areas such as digitalization, industrialization, innovation and inclusive growth. The initiative will become a flagship program for BRICS and is expected to play a key role in enhancing the group's competitiveness in the international arena.

The BRICS Plus model, initiated at the Xiamen summit in China in 2017, continued in Johannesburg. Representatives from a number of African countries and other emerging markets were invited to an outreach session. Wider engagement is conducive to making BRICS more influential, while cementing the partnership between the BRICS and African countries.

Building connectivity

Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative, in 2013, with the aim of building a trade and infrastructure network connecting Asia with Europe and Africa, based on the ancient Silk Road trade routes. Many countries in Africa are enthusiastic about participating in the initiative. Shortly after the close of the annual sessions of the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the country's top political advisory body, in March, the presidents of

The author is a senior researcher with the Charhar Institute and a researcher with the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

COURTESY PHOTO

South African students celebrate graduating from the Huawei Authorized Information and Network Academy, a training program offered by the Chinese tech company.

Cameroon, Namibia and Zimbabwe visited China and expressed their hopes of aligning their own development strategies with the Belt and Road Initiative.

In July, during his first foreign tour after being reelected as Chinese president in March, Xi visited four African countries in addition to attending the BRICS summit in Johannesburg. This trip saw China's signing of memorandums of understanding on jointly pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative with Senegal and Rwanda. Mauritius also reached an agreement with China to finalize a similar document as soon as possible.

Driven by the Belt and Road Initiative, improving infrastructure interconnectivity and strengthening industrial capacity cooperation have become key areas of China-Africa relations. It is the new consensus of China and African nations to promote industrial development and reduce poverty through investment in infrastructure-related projects within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

In order to push forward Africa's industrialization, China has established the China-Africa Fund for Industrial Cooperation with startup capital of $10 billion. It has also increased the capital of the China-Africa Development Fund and the Special Loan for the Development of African Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises by $5 billion each.

Remarkable results have been achieved in recent years, including the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway, which opened in October 2016, and the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway in May 2017. The construction of industrial parks along these rail routes has seen preliminary success.

The FOCAC Beijing summit will seek to integrate the Belt and Road Initiative, the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and African countries' own development strategies. Based on this synergy, new measures will be unveiled to further the China-Africa partnership.

Promoting understanding

As China-Africa relations flourish, however, bitter feelings and jealousy have surfaced in certain quarters. Some politicians, media outlets and NGOs that presume their interests in Africa are being encroached upon have misread China's involvement, accusing the country of plundering African resources, damaging the local environment and supporting "failed states."

However, according to a 2017 McKinsey report, 89% of employees at surveyed Chinese-owned companies in Africa were African, most of whom underwent considerable skills training. "On balance, we believe that China's growing involvement is strongly positive for Africa's economies, governments, and workers," said the report.

Those accusations are far-fetched with hardly any factual basis. The Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway, for instance, is a telling example of balancing modernization and environmental protection. Moreover, thriving China-Africa trade, which has contributed to 20% of Africa's economic growth in recent years, coupled with China's assistance in infrastructure construction, poverty alleviation and personnel training, has helped solidify economic and human resource foundations for Africa's democracy and good governance. China and African countries also share experience through political party and think tank dialogues, which some have misinterpreted as an attempt to export the Chinese model. In the final analysis, though, it is up to Africans to choose their own path of development. ■

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After the dying things are done

By Susanna Schrobsdorff

I'M PAYING FOR A COFFEE IN BROOKLYN when a doctor in Massachusetts calls and asks for permission to intubate my uncle. It's urgent. His lung has collapsed, and he's lost consciousness. There's no time to consider what it means to put an 82-year-old with a slew of health conditions on a ventilator. So I say yes. On my drive to the hospital, another doctor calls to say they need to do a bronchoscopy. I ask if it will hurt, and she says he's sedated. So I say yes again.

Just like that, I've put booming, unshakably cheerful Uncle Bear into a system of maximum intervention because of my own panic, not reason, not research. Later, when I look at the statistics, the odds of recovery, or what they call a return to baseline, are not great. There's even a debate about whether the very elderly should be admitted to ICUs at all because of the cost. By 2050 there will be an estimated 19 million Americans over 85—including me—up from 4 million in 2000.

I imagined this kind of decisionmaking would take place in a hospital family room where doctors would lay out the options for me and my sister Ingalisa. Turns out, those conversations would come later, and the choices would include undoing some of what I'd agreed to in that coffee shop.

It was late when I got to the hospital. A nurse made up a cot for me in his room. How many times had she performed that small kindness before? I can't really see Bear's face from the cot in the dark, just the shape of the hulking, sighing ventilator. Sometimes it looks as if it's reaching down with its twin air hoses to scoop him up and take him away. But mostly, the sound is comforting. He won't die tonight. That machine won't let him, for better or worse.

UNCLE BEAR REMAINED the family's unalloyed optimist, even after he lost his wife Susie. His outsize intelligence never got in the way of his enthusiasm for almost everything, particularly scotch. The rest of us take after Bear's Irish father, who when confronted with a sunny day would say, only half in jest, "We'll pay for this." My favorite photo of Bear is of him cutting a cake on my fifth birthday, cackling with a lit cigar in his mouth. The ash looks as if it's about a millisecond away from dropping onto the frosting. He doesn't notice. But me? I look as if I'm ready to pass out with worry.

Over the next 10 days, the doctors explain the balancing act. Fix one thing and risk something else. It's a corporeal Rubik's Cube. Then there's the ventilator. They can't seem to wean him off it. He's at the cloudy intersection of living, breathing and dying, with the first two states not being the same thing at all.

My sister and I gather in the nurses' break room with the ICU doctor and Bear's primary-care physician, who explains that even a young body can't take being intubated for too long, and the alternative is a tracheotomy and a feeding tube, probably for life because of his age. We all get teary at the thought of the voluble Bear being unable to talk or eat. "No, no, no," we say. "That can't happen."

They tell us there will be morphine to quell the air hunger if he fails once the tube is out. A chaplain is available. And there's us: the nieces; his wife's sister, the magnificent Wissie, who has been propping us up for days with humor and wine; plus the grandnieces and friends. And the ICU doctor says gently, "You know, you don't hold his life in your hands. You are not taking anything away from him. It's up to him." I'm not sure if she meant God or Bear, but it didn't matter. We understood.

Uncle Bear in 2015

Just like that, I've put booming, unshakably cheerful Uncle Bear into a system of maximum intervention because of my own panic, not reason, not research

They take the ventilator out the next morning. Bear is sore and disoriented, but he's breathing on his own. Soon, he's cracking jokes about how he's so thin, he's only 8 lb. away from a modeling contract. He thinks he's 62 and owns a plane that can land on water.

Bear is untethered from reality, but not from himself. "I hate to be an old prognosticator, but my advice is, Don't give up," he tells a young nurse. "The boat will come back for you." When I show him a photo of his grandnieces, he can't name them but proclaims, "I love everyone in that frame!"

Now he's in a subacute rehabilitation facility, emphasis on facility. And this is where the statistics loom again. He's so weak and so thin. And all the conditions that landed him in the ICU are not better—they're worse. This is the baggage of a life lived with indulgence and the kind of optimism that allows one to ignore medical warnings. Will he have the strength to walk again, or go home?

I think he's wondering too. "Now that those dying things are finished, what's next?" Bear asked me the other night. "Ice cream," I said. Of course he adores hospital vanilla ice cream in a Styrofoam cup.

I don't know what's next now that we've been granted a reprieve from the tubes and dying things. And I really don't know what I'll do if I get another call asking whether he should be intubated. But I do know that I'm going to stop worrying so much about the ash before it falls. What a waste of precious time. ◻

COURTESY SUSANNA SCHROBSDORFF

Raising optimistic kids in an era of pessimism

By KJ Dell'Antonia

WANTED: OPTIMISTS. MUST ENJOY CHALLENGES, APPRECIATE possibilities and possess a deep belief in your ability to master a situation. Hope for the future a must, and confidence in that hope a strong plus. If your motto is "try, try again," you're perfectly set to make the most of this—or any—opportunity.

There are excellent reasons for anyone—nations, businesses, schools—to seek out the optimistic. And they are even truer for parents. Optimists make better entrepreneurs, experience better health outcomes, live longer and are more satisfied with their relationships. Their optimism enables them to continue to strive in the face of difficulty, while pessimism leaves them depressed and resigned to failure—even expecting it.

I want a hopeful outlook for my children. I think most of us do. But we live in particularly pessimistic times, especially when we consider the environment, the government and education. The resulting stew of negativity makes me worry that the future—my kids' future—will be grimmer. Yet how can I expect them to practice what I barely manage to preach?

Fortunately, research suggests ways to help our children grow up with the resilient "can do" attitude that's the mark of the optimist—and maintain a happier disposition ourselves. Here's what I've learned, and what I'm trying.

PAY ATTENTION TO THE POSITIVE

There's one problem with the pessimist's perspective: progress is happening everywhere. Humanity has improved by many measures—life expectancy, poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, religious tolerance, gender equality. But that success has become the water in which we swim, and like fish, we take the water for granted. While we fail to notice the positive, our brains naturally emphasize the negative. As neuropsychologist Rick Hanson described in his 2013 book *Hardwiring Happiness,* we are designed to focus on the beasts that are still out there in the deep rather than on those we have tamed.

But with practice, we can help our brains give the good stuff equal weight. Hanson's advice: when you hear a great story or achieve something in your own life or just find yourself in a beautiful place with those you love, deliberately rest your mind on that experience and stay with it. Sink into that feeling, he writes, "as it sinks into you." Describe what you're doing to your kids, and encourage them to dwell on their joys and pleasures as well.

CHANGE HOW YOU EXPLAIN CURRENT EVENTS

Optimism can be developed. Researchers found that when even people with a more pessimistic outlook use positive language to describe situations they find traumatic, their feelings about the situation become more positive, and their more generalized sense of optimism increases. That's something we can try at home. While an event that's driving the news may be bad, I tell my kids to take note of all the people trying to do something about it. Our pessimism derives in large part from our collective expectation that we can do better. But that can be a source of optimism as well.

Our pessimism derives from our collective expectation that we can do better. But that can be a source of optimism as well

MODERATE YOUR NEWS INTAKE

On any given day, ugly things have been said and done, justice has not been served—and vast forces are now aligned to ensure we don't miss a minute of it. But those flashes of anxiety are mostly pointless. I may need and want to know what's going on in the world, but news delivered in that manner evokes fear rather than informs, and it makes our children worried as well. It's difficult for them to feel secure when they see us reacting constantly to outside events that are often invisible to them. That's why I've turned my news notifications off.

INVOLVE YOURSELF IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Following the "big scary" news can not only leave us feeling helpless and distraught, it can also distract us from the smaller issues where knowing the facts and then acting might make a difference. So put your energy toward making sure you and your family are a part of the world immediately around you. That might mean volunteering or voting, but it might also mean simply joining and being part of local institutions and clubs that feed our natural human need for connection (not of the digital kind). Find something in your area that makes you feel hopeful, and make it a part of your family life.

Raising optimistic kids is hard, in part, because it demands that parents relinquish the cynical perspective that's the easiest response to an era of pessimism. But while I don't know what I or you or our kids can do to make the news better, I do know that we need to find ways to try—and that means answering the "optimists wanted" call, and raising our children to do the same. Hopeful, resilient problem solvers needed. No application necessary. Just show up, and make the best of it.

Dell'Antonia is the author of How to Be a Happier Parent: Raising a Family, Having a Life, and Loving (Almost) Every Minute

ILLUSTRATION BY MARTIN GEE FOR TIME

Trump and the ghosts of scandals past

By Jon Meacham

THE EVENING ENDED BADLY. ON DEC. 13, 1950, THE Washington columnist Drew Pearson was being feted at a birthday dinner at the Sulgrave Club near Dupont Circle. A vocal opponent of Senator Joseph McCarthy, Pearson had relentlessly attacked the Wisconsin lawmaker ever since McCarthy launched his red-hunting campaign that February. Still, small-town Washington being small-town Washington, McCarthy was invited to the party. He was, one notable guest recalled, spoiling for a fight. Emboldened by shots of bourbon, McCarthy asked Pearson to step outside, but the columnist demurred.

At the end of the party, Senator Richard Nixon—the guest who noted McCarthy's belligerence—walked into the club's cloakroom to find McCarthy's "big, thick hands around Pearson's neck," Nixon remembered in his memoirs. The Senator had kneed the columnist twice in the groin, and in front of Nixon he "slapped Pearson so hard that his head snapped back." McCarthy grumbled, "That one was for you, Dick." Nixon tried to play peacemaker, stepping between the two men. Pearson hurried away, and McCarthy strutted a bit, remarking, "You shouldn't have stopped me, Dick."

A street fight in the cloakroom of the Sulgrave may seem like a relic from a different era, but the scene is actually a perfect image for the Age of Trump. A headline-hunting demagogue is once again lashing out at the press, and both McCarthy and Nixon have been vaulted back to the fore of the national consciousness.

The 45th President, to put it charitably, is hardly a student of history, so his forays into the American past tend to repay attention for whatever light they may shed on the curious chambers of his mind. A showman who prefers to act on instinct rather than cool consideration, he has nevertheless in recent days turned backward in search of aid in the battles of the present, invoking both McCarthy and Nixon as he struggles to discredit special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation amid the conviction of his former adviser Paul Manafort and the guilty plea of his former personal lawyer Michael Cohen.

THAT TRUMP HAS mused about McCarthy and Nixon is revealing, for the analogies draw on two politicians whose public careers ended in disgrace and defeat: in McCarthy's case, censure by the Senate; in Nixon's, resignation from office. It's as if the President identifies with these dark figures and may well see his own predicament in similarly existential terms as he awaits Mueller's report and the final outcomes of Manafort's and Cohen's legal travails. As Mueller has closed in, Trump has not tweeted about Iran-*contra,* for example, or Whitewater—crises that other Presidents survived.

In a moment that stretched the boundaries of irony beyond recognition, the President took to Twitter to accuse Mueller of McCarthyite tactics, itself a McCarthyite maneuver. Yet Mueller is not the McCarthyite figure; Trump is. Both McCarthy and Trump were opportunists who used whatever issue might be at hand to dominate the news and seek power. McCarthy turned to anti-communism, his lawyer Roy Cohn said, the way other people might buy a car: as a means to an end. For McCarthy, the end goal was fame and influence. Trump embraced the disproved conspiracy theory that Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. to launch his foray into right-wing politics, eventually gaining enough of a foothold to seek the presidency in 2016. (And then there's the Cohn connection: McCarthy's lawyer also represented Trump in New York's real estate wars and served as a key mentor.)

Both McCarthy and Trump understood the media of their day, manipulating it while simultaneously attacking it as corrupt and biased. And both had little regard for the truth. "He was impatient, overly aggressive, overly dramatic," Cohn recalled of McCarthy in 1968. "He acted on impulse."

Trump's tweet about Mueller was followed by one returning to the minutiae of Watergate. In an assault on a New York *Times* report about White House counsel Donald McGahn's cooperation with Mueller, the President wrote that McGahn was not "a John Dean type 'RAT'"—an allusion to the 1973 testimony of the Nixon White House counsel that helped reveal the cover-up of the Watergate burglary. The President's own parallel between the two events shows that he has now evidently begun to see the Russia investigation as something akin to Watergate, a scandal that cost the President his job.

Analogies, of course, are frequently imperfect. Most of the time examples from the past are useful not because they neatly predict the future but because they can create a sense of proportion and perspective about the present. Yet as the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. used to say, history is to a nation as memory is to a person, and all of us tend to judge the moment in reference to what's come before. That Trump is alluding to the falls of two flawed leaders suggests that he may, at least subconsciously, be thinking about his own. □

PAST IS PROLOGUE?

On Aug. 19, Trump urged Twitter followers to "study" former Senator **Joe McCarthy,** likening his Red Scare campaign to Mueller's investigation, which he calls a "witch hunt."

The same day, Trump tweeted that his White House counsel isn't a "rat" like **Richard Nixon** counsel John Dean, whose cooperation with Watergate prosecutors helped end Nixon's presidency.

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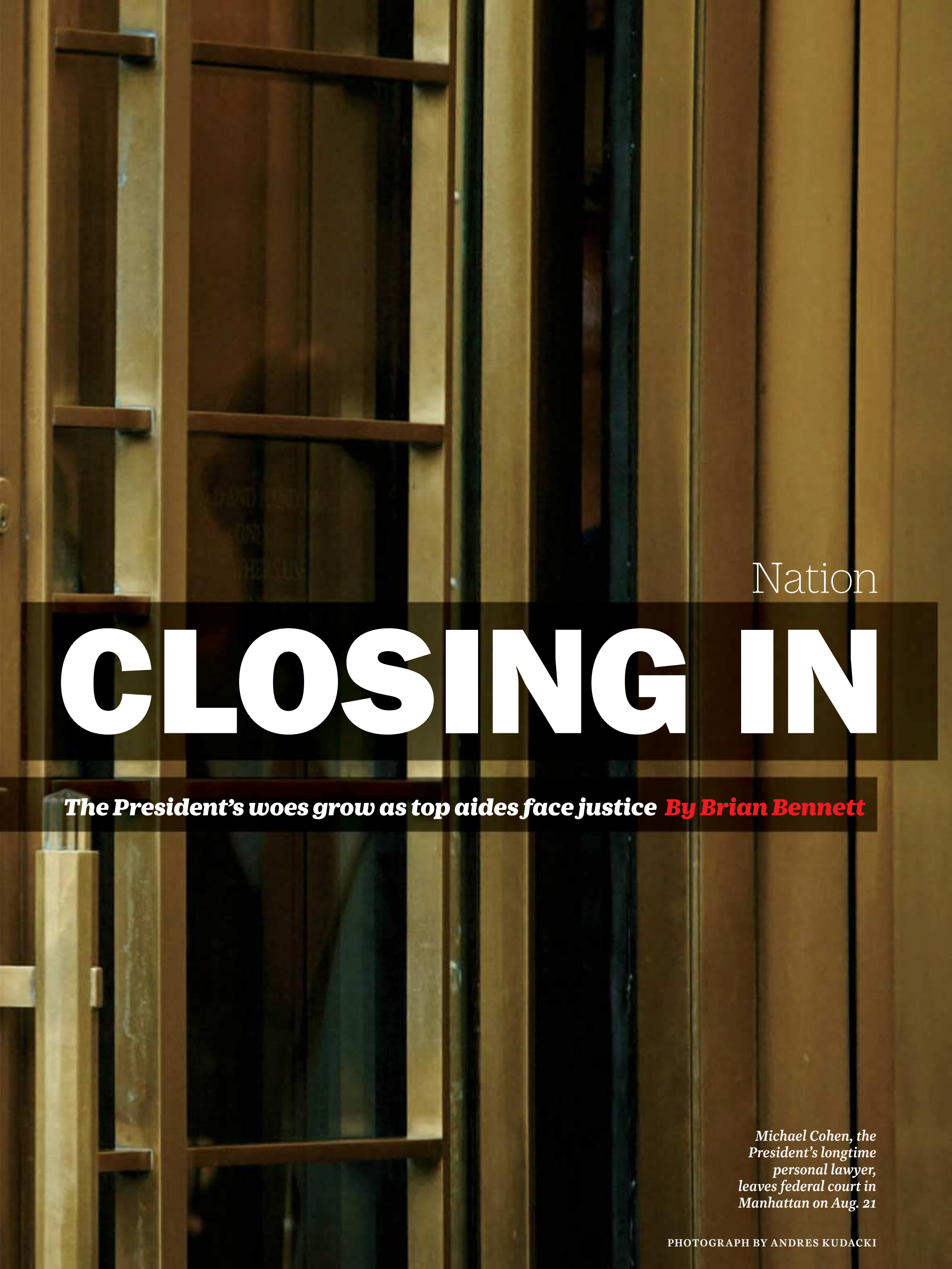
CLOSING IN

The President's woes grow as top aides face justice ***By Brian Bennett***



Michael Cohen, the President's longtime personal lawyer, leaves federal court in Manhattan on Aug. 21

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDRES KUDACKI

Michael Cohen once believed he would lead Donald Trump's presidential campaign.

When that didn't come to pass, he told friends he might be White House chief of staff. That didn't happen either, but still he swore he'd "take a bullet" for Trump. In the end, the President's longtime personal lawyer stood before a federal judge in a New York City courthouse on Aug. 21 and swore to something else entirely: that he had engaged in a crime coordinated by the man who now sits in the Oval Office.

Even in a presidency punctuated by surreal moments, it was a stunning scene. Cohen pleaded guilty to eight felony counts, including arranging payments during the 2016 campaign to suppress two women's accounts of alleged extramarital affairs with Trump. "I participated in this conduct," Cohen avowed, "in coordination with and at the direction of" Trump himself. With that extraordinary statement, he implicated the President of the United States in a federal crime—to be violating campaign-finance laws—"principal purpose," of which he said, was to influence an election that Trump won by only 78,000 votes in three states.

The courtroom drama brought all the President's legal and political problems together in a single supernova. It highlighted Trump's sordid history with women, his willingness to blur the lines between business and politics, and growing fallout from the investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller, who referred the Cohen case to federal prosecutors. Worse, the explosion came minutes after Trump's onetime campaign chairman Paul Manafort was convicted on eight counts of tax evasion and bank fraud in a case prosecuted by Mueller's deputies. And it followed revelations that White House counsel Don McGahn has cooperated extensively with Mueller's probe, sitting for more than 30 hours of detailed and candid interviews.

It was arguably the most pivotal day in this presidency, and the consequences are only beginning to kick in. Cohen's plea raised questions that cut to the heart of Trump's legitimacy. If Trump was willing to deploy his vast fortune to quash salacious stories, as Cohen alleges, what else might he have used his wealth for? What other damaging information could the President's former fixer share? And what scrutiny awaits Trump's business empire, which the President has sought to shield from the widening probes?

For now, Trump may not pay a political or legal price. He has benefited from an unshakable bond with his base: even as criminal investigations seep further into his inner circle, Trump has averaged an 87% approval rating from Republicans so far in his second year, according to Gallup. And many legal experts believe that as President he cannot be indicted for a crime while in office. "He did nothing wrong," said White House spokesperson Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Aug. 22. "There are no charges against him in this. And just because Michael Cohen has made a deal doesn't mean that that implicates the President on anything."

There was no question, however, that the late-August events mark a new and dangerous phase for Trump.

PREVIOUS PAGES: NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; THESE PAGES: LEAH MILLIS—REUTERS

Trump at an Aug. 21 rally in Charleston, W.Va., hours after the Cohen bombshell

"For the first time," says former federal prosecutor David Axelrod, "we've seen, in court, evidence strongly linking the President to criminal acts." That testimony, offered under oath by the President's former lawyer, will only embolden Mueller and energize Trump's Democratic opponents. It left West Wing staffers scrambling to soothe their furious boss. And it carried unmistakable echoes of John Dean's turn against Richard Nixon in 1973, along with the growing sense that a presidency suffused with scandal is confronting its toughest fight yet.

IN A FITTING TWIST for a President from New York City, the trouble began with taxis. In addition to his day job as a Trump Organization executive, Cohen dabbled in real estate, medical businesses and even an offshore casino boat. By 2010, according to court documents, Cohen had also bought a portfolio of taxi medallions, the metal placards that allow drivers to operate cabs in cities like New York and Chicago. Cohen leased the medallions to drivers and, according to his plea, failed to report all of the profits to the IRS. In one scheme between 2012 and 2016, Cohen earned more than $2.4 million in interest from loans he made to a taxi

operator who leased some of his Chicago medallions. In another, Cohen failed to report $1.3 million in income for a different taxi operator who paid Cohen personally for part of the leases, rather than Cohen's medallion company. Cohen also didn't report $100,000 he received for brokering a Florida real estate deal, or a $30,000 fee he charged in 2015 for arranging the sale of a Birkin bag, a high-priced French handbag. In total, he confessed to concealing more than $4 million in personal income.

Suspicion that Cohen had engaged in tax evasion and bank fraud led Mueller to refer the matter to investigators in New York's Southern District. On April 9, the FBI stormed Cohen's hotel room, apartment, law office and bank boxes, collecting computers, cell phones, tax records and other materials. The raid was unusual not only because Cohen had been the President's personal lawyer but also because prosecutors have to get special permission from a judge before raiding a lawyer's property unannounced to avoid violating attorney-client privilege.

The evidence uncovered led to the Aug. 21 plea deal. Unveiling it, prosecutors released new details about Cohen's role in arranging payments to two women, former *Playboy* model Karen McDougal and pornographic actor Stephanie Clifford, who performs under the name Stormy Daniels, to quash embarrassing stories about their alleged liaisons with Trump. In the summer of 2015, according to court documents, David Pecker, a Trump friend and the chairman of American Media Inc., the company that publishes the *National Enquirer,* told Cohen he would act as something of a fixer for the campaign. Cohen told prosecutors that Pecker agreed to "help deal with negative stories" about Trump's "relationships with women." He offered to assist the campaign in "identifying such stories so they could be purchased and their publication avoided," a practice known in the tabloid industry as "catch and kill."

COHEN'S PLEA OPENS UP PROBLEMS FOR THE PRESIDENT THAT GO BEYOND HIS IMPLICATION IN A CRIME

In June 2016, a month before Trump became the Republican nominee for President, Pecker alerted Cohen that McDougal had offered to sell the *Enquirer* the story of her affair with Trump, which allegedly took place shortly after Trump's wife Melania gave birth to their son Barron, according to court documents. Cohen told prosecutors he urged Pecker to buy the story and promised to reimburse the magazine. Pecker's company paid McDougal $150,000 for the rights to the story, which the *Enquirer* never published. The "principal purpose" of the deal, Cohen told prosecutors, was to suppress the story to prevent it from influencing the election. In late July 2018, Cohen's attorney Lanny Davis released a secret audio recording from September 2016 in which Cohen tells Trump "we'll have to pay" to purchase the rights to McDougal's story. Trump responds, "Pay with cash."

Around Oct. 8, 2016, an agent for Clifford approached an editor at American Media about telling the story of her own alleged affair with Trump. It was the day after the release of the bombshell videotape of Trump on the *Access Hollywood* set, bragging to "purchase [her] silence," according to Cohen's plea.

When Cohen failed to pay Clifford immediately, Clifford's then attorney told the editor that she would take her story to another publication. The editor texted Cohen, according to court documents, telling him, we "have to coordinate something … or it could look awfully bad for everyone." Two days later, Cohen wired $130,000 to Clifford's attorney, and Clifford signed a nondisclosure agreement, according to the court documents.

Cohen was reimbursed for his payment to Clifford by the Trump Organization in monthly installments of $35,000, the court records show. The Trump Organization itemized the invoices as legal services, even though Cohen had

UNDER FIRE

The investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller and related work by other federal officials have already entangled high-profile figures within President Trump's orbit. Here's a look at who has been convicted and who is under the microscope:

CONVICTED · PLEADED GUILTY · UNDER SCRUTINY

PAUL MANAFORT
TRUMP CAMPAIGN CHAIRMAN
Convicted of tax and bank fraud. Awaiting trial for unregistered foreign lobbying

RICK GATES
TRUMP DEPUTY CAMPAIGN MANAGER
Pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI and conspiring to hide income earned overseas

MICHAEL COHEN
TRUMP PERSONAL LAWYER
Pleaded guilty to tax evasion, bank fraud and campaign-finance violations

MICHAEL FLYNN
TRUMP NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER
Pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about contacts with the Russian ambassador

not provided any, according to the plea.

All this end ran federal laws barring campaign contributions of more than $27,000 by an individual or any amount by a corporation. Legal experts say that if Trump had paid Cohen out of his own bank account, it would not have been a violation of campaign-finance law. "It's because he chose to use the corporate coffers to reimburse Cohen that you get this additional violation of federal law by the Trump Organization, and by extension Donald Trump himself," says Paul S. Ryan, vice president of policy and litigation at Common Cause, a nonpartisan organization that filed complaints with the Department of Justice and the Federal Election Commission earlier this year regarding the campaign's payments to Clifford and American Media.

IF ANYONE IMAGINED that these sordid details didn't add up to serious legal jeopardy for Trump, the top law-enforcement officials on the case set them straight after the Aug. 21 hearing. As the U.S. prosecutor on the case, Robert Khuzami, said, "We are a nation of laws, with one set of rules that applies equally to everyone." William F. Sweeney Jr., the FBI's top New York cop, chimed in that "we are all expected to follow the rule of law." And James Robnett, the special agent in charge of the IRS's New York Criminal Investigation unit said Cohen's plea "sends a clear message that the tax laws apply to everybody."

And the transactions open up problems for the President that go beyond his implication in a federal crime. By confessing that he invoiced the Trump Organization, Cohen may draw increased scrutiny to the company's books. That could result in the closest look yet at the finances of a President who has steadfastly refused to release his tax returns.

Already, some Trump antagonists have seized on Cohen's statements as supporting evidence in their own ongoing legal battles. "The likelihood of me being able to depose Michael Cohen and the President of the United States just went up exponentially," says Michael Avenatti, Clifford's attorney, whose motion to take testimony from both men awaits a hearing. A California judge had stayed the case pending the outcome of the Cohen investigation. A hearing on

Trump and Cohen visit Portsmouth, N.H., in April 2011

GEORGE PAPADOPOULOS
TRUMP CAMPAIGN ADVISER
Pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his Russian contacts

ALEX VAN DER ZWAAN
LAWYER
Spent 30 days in prison and was deported after pleading guilty to lying to the FBI

ROGER STONE
TRUMP ADVISER
Reportedly under investigation by Mueller's team

DONALD TRUMP JR.
TRUMP SON
Testified before a Senate committee about contacts with a Kremlin-tied Russian lawyer in 2016

CARTER PAGE
TRUMP CAMPAIGN ADVISER
Surveilled by federal investigators for his contacts with Russians

TOP: RICK FRIEDMAN—POLARIS; BOTTOM: MANAFORT: AP/SHUTTERSTOCK; GATES, VAN DER ZWAAN: GETTY IMAGES; COHEN: REUTERS; FLYNN: THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES; PAPADOPOULOS: ALEXANDRIA (VA.) SHERIFF'S OFFICE; STONE: GETTY IMAGES FOR POLITICON; TRUMP JR.: AFP/GETTY IMAGES; PAGE: ABC/GETTY IMAGES

whether to lift the stay is scheduled for Sept. 10 in Los Angeles.

All this would be worrisome enough for the President if his problems ended with Cohen. But they don't. In the same hour the lawyer pleaded guilty to eight felonies in Manhattan, Manafort was facing the music in a courtroom outside Washington. His conviction on eight criminal charges—two counts of bank fraud, five counts of tax fraud and one count of failing to disclose foreign bank accounts—illustrates the depth and breadth Mueller's investigation. That probe has already resulted in more than 100 criminal charges against 33 people and three companies and secured guilty pleas from Manafort's longtime deputy Rick Gates, former Trump National Security Adviser Michael Flynn and former Trump campaign aide George Papadopoulos.

During the Manafort trial, federal prosecutors did not address possible collusion between Trump's presidential campaign and Russian actors, but they did show that Mueller's investigators are looking closely at potential financial crimes. The Mueller probe reportedly has ensnared top Trump associates like Roger Stone over what he knew about WikiLeaks' release of emails stolen from the Hillary Clinton campaign chairman's account. Mueller is reportedly also looking at the President's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., for his role in a secret meeting during the 2016 campaign with a Russian lawyer, billed to the campaign as an opportunity to gain damaging information on Clinton. Cohen has reportedly said he is willing to tell Mueller that Trump was aware of the June 2016 meeting in Trump Tower before it happened.

Trump's most immediate peril may not be on the legal front. Justice Department guidelines restrict prosecutors from bringing charges against a sitting President—he can be indicted only after he leaves office. But the political toll of the mushrooming scandals is another matter. In the short term, he is unlikely to see his support drop. "This won't be a blip in polls," a top Democratic Senate aide predicted. "Literally, nothing changes this guy's polling." Most Americans have fixed their opinions about him by now. "This stopped being a game of persuasion in about October of 2016," a top Republican on Capitol Hill said.

Manafort, outside a federal courthouse in Washington in June, was found guilty of eight counts of bank and tax fraud on Aug. 21

But the courtroom drama cemented corruption as a theme that Democrats will use to hammer Republicans in the 11 weeks until the midterm elections. Democrats are wary for now of the argument that Cohen's claims should initiate impeachment proceedings, fearing the prospect would energize Trump's supporters more than their own. Some of the most successful messaging tests Democrats have seen, according to two top strategists who have conducted focus groups in representative districts, is to cast incumbent Republicans as "yes men" to the President. That's why strategists close to House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi recently sent a memo to Democratic candidates with a proposed message: run as a check on Trump's agenda. In their research, pollsters found that Democratic candidates saw a 12-point bump using that message; among independent and nonaligned voters, the rhetoric was worth 14 percentage points.

If Trump's spreading scandals engulf Republicans in November, Democrats could find themselves chairing committees next January with broad powers to investigate the President and his associates. A Democratic House or Senate could challenge the White House on everything from the President's coveted border wall to his tax returns. Washington would tilt on its axis as Democrats with subpoena power move against their beleaguered opponent in the White House.

MANAFORT: ERIN SCHAFF—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; COVER: DIRCK HALSTEAD (NIXON) AND FRED WARD-BLACK STAR (DEAN)

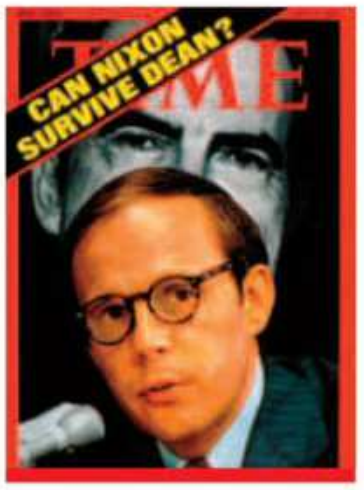
Which is why Cohen's courtroom turn could be the start of a consequential, even historic, period in American politics. More details of his allegations against Trump will surely emerge. A second Manafort trial on charges he acted as an unregistered foreign agent will get under way in September. And eventually Mueller will likely issue a report detailing everything he has found about Russia's 2016 meddling and whether the Trump campaign was involved. At which point Democrats who might control one or both chambers on Capitol Hill could be expected to look beyond their own investigations to impeachment. —*With reporting by* ALANA ABRAMSON, HALEY SWEETLAND EDWARDS *and* KATIE REILLY/NEW YORK; *and* MOLLY BALL, RYAN TEAGUE BECKWITH, PHILIP ELLIOTT *and* ABBY VESOULIS/WASHINGTON

INTERVIEW

WHAT NIXON LAWYER JOHN DEAN LEARNED FROM HISTORY

BY OLIVIA B. WAXMAN

PUNDITS LIKE TO MAKE comparisons between President Donald Trump and President Richard Nixon, but those links aren't usually drawn by Trump himself. An exception came on Aug. 19 when Trump tweeted, in light of the news that White House counsel Don McGahn had met with Robert Mueller's team, that McGahn wasn't a "John Dean type 'RAT.'" Dean, as Nixon's White House counsel, played a key role—by deciding to cooperate with prosecutors—in the events leading up to that President's resignation. Speaking to TIME on Aug. 21, Dean said he wished he'd had an example he could turn to when he was deciding what to do back then. Now he's playing that very role—for Michael Cohen. Dean spoke to TIME about the news and what he thinks of his own return to headlines.



The July 9, 1973 cover of TIME

What's your reaction to Cohen's statement that payments he arranged during the Trump campaign were made "at the direction of the candidate"? He has pretty much identified the President as a criminal. He said he did it at his behest. If [Trump] weren't President, he probably would be named as a co-conspirator and indicted.

What does that mean for the comparisons to Watergate? It's conspiracy. Watergate was a conspiracy. This is a campaign conspiracy.

What's your reaction to the Manafort trial verdict? It's not surprising. It's clear that the jury went carefully through the case. It's an opening shot by the special counsel. It really sets up the situation that Manafort was in.

What did you think of Trump calling you a rat for your role in exposing the Watergate cover-up? That just didn't surprise me at all. Every day, he throws invective at somebody. I was trying to be the honest guy and stop all this nonsense of spinning and lying and twisting history. I was more distressed or annoyed by him calling the true public servants who have taken salary cuts to go to work for Bob Mueller "thugs."

You've recently found yourself back in the news for something that happened decades ago. How does it feel to have gone viral? It's not surprising. It's a culmination of what's been going on. I didn't know when Michael Cohen was going to plead or work a deal out, but I knew it was imminent because I was talking to his lawyer Lanny Davis, whom I know personally, and he was picking my brain as to what had happened and how it had all happened back during Watergate. I wasn't giving legal advice, just historical information.

What do you think will happen next? It's not clear, unlike Watergate, how the public is going to become educated about all this. There is really no equivalent to the Senate Watergate Committee. The Republicans just won't set it up. They don't want to inform the public about this. So as long as they control the House and Senate, they're not going to. Let's say the House goes Democratic after the election—I suspect we will learn [about it] through a combination of oversight committees.

Is there anything you learned during Watergate that would be useful for people to keep in mind as the news develops? It's early. Watergate went on for years, and it takes time for the public to one, learn; two, even get interested in learning; and three, react. That's one of the things that Watergate certainly teaches us. What's very useful and what got me through the whole matter was my belief that the truth ultimately prevails.

Navarro, pictured in June at a Trump rally in Duluth, Minn., is viewed as an outlier by his fellow economists

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER

Economy

Peter Navarro used to be a Democrat. Today he's the architect of President Trump's trade war

By Molly Ball

If Peter Navarro ever doubted that he was a Democrat, a look at the other side was enough to convince him. Republicans talked about virtue and prosperity, but they were really a bunch of greedy, intolerant hypocrites, he thought.

The "insufferably bigoted, close-minded, and dangerously well-disciplined storm troopers on the religious right," he wrote in a 1998 memoir, *San Diego Confidential,* "wield far too much influence at the ballot box." The GOP was in thrall to "buffoons, sociopaths, and zealots like Rush Limbaugh, Newt Gingrich, and Ralph Reed." Its economic policies consisted of "tax schemes to further enrich the rich," and its leaders could not be trusted "to do anything but trash the environment under the phony banner of economic progress."

Twenty years ago, Navarro was a liberal economist who admired Hillary Clinton, argued for taxing the rich and had run for office as a Democrat four times. Today he is a top economic adviser to a Republican President. As Donald Trump's director of trade and industrial policy, Navarro is known for his advocacy of tariffs and opposition to trade deals. It is Navarro who has pushed Trump to wage an escalating trade war that pits the U.S. against not only economic adversaries like China but also allies like Canada and the European Union. He is the most powerful person in Washington on the most volatile issue of Trump's presidency.

Navarro's positions put him at odds with most economists, most Republicans and many in the business community. But they are in sync with the President's long-standing conviction that the U.S. is being ripped off by other countries. "Trump listens to Peter, especially when it comes to China," says Stephen Moore, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation, who frequently advises Trump and who disagrees with the tariff push. It is Navarro who helps translate Trump's beliefs into action, supplying him with policy direction, affirmation and arguments to help his case. His role is akin to that of Trump's senior policy adviser, Stephen Miller, who has become notorious for pushing Trump toward the restrictionist immigration policies he instinctively favors. Navarro, though less well known, is the Miller of economic policy, the voice in Trump's ear that eggs him on against the experts.

His power has grown in recent months. Navarro, 69, won a formal promotion in February. Most of his free-trade opponents on Trump's economic team have left the Administration. The U.S. has moved aggressively to implement his preferred policies, imposing wide-ranging tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of imported goods. "Trump wants

Key battles in Trump's trade war

Under the guidance of economic adviser Peter Navarro, President Trump has pursued punitive policies toward major trade partners—from China to Europe to neighboring Canada. In July, Trump threatened to roll out tariffs on nearly all U.S. imports from China, totaling more than $500 billion in goods. Here's what has happened so far, in 2018:

JAN. 22
Trump approves **tariffs on imported washing machines and solar panels** to help U.S. manufacturers. Some solar-industry representatives protest the move, arguing it will dampen demand and hurt solar-panel installers.

MARCH 1
Trump announces tariffs on steel and aluminum from most countries, ultimately covering $41 billion in imports. Because little comes from China due to prior trade restrictions, **this policy mainly affects U.S. allies** like Canada, the E.U. and Mexico.

APRIL 2
China retaliates, imposing **tariffs on U.S. exports including scrap aluminum, pork, fruits and nuts.** The value of these goods—about $3 billion—mirrors the value of Chinese steel and aluminum imports.

JUNE 10
In a sign of the tariffs' diplomatic repercussions, **the normally cordial G-7 summit melts down,** with Trump insulting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and pulling out of the group's previously negotiated joint communiqué.

SOURCES: PETERSON INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS; DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE; NEWS REPORTS

Navarro is the most powerful person in Washington on the most volatile issue of Donald Trump's presidency

to do protectionism, and when almost everyone in the room is saying, 'We cannot do that, it'll destroy the economy,' he'll say, 'Where's my Peter? What does Peter think?'" says a prominent conservative trade expert. "The President looks for validation, and the folks keeping the devil off his shoulder have disappeared."

Trump's tariffs have drawn retaliatory actions and jolted the markets. They have also created diplomatic headaches, complicating relations with America's closest allies. Most economists believe that in the long run, Navarro's vision would cause a major hit to the U.S. economy, with rising inflation, bankrupt farms and businesses, and thousands of lost jobs. "There is a lot of evidence that inward-looking economic policies that isolate a country from the rest of the world are bad for that country," says Greg Mankiw, a Harvard economist who chaired the Council of Economic Advisers under President George W. Bush. "You could make a list of the 100 most prominent economists in the world, and Peter Navarro wouldn't be on it. His views are very, very far from the mainstream."

As the trade debate rages, the policy's architect remains something of a mystery. How did Navarro, a Democrat whose philosophy was formed by environmentalism and anti-corporatism, become the man behind Trump's trade war?

PETER NAVARRO ORIGINALLY set out to be a politician, not just an adviser to one. But he had a problem: people didn't like him. "He had this burning desire to be important, to be in charge," says Larry Remer, a San Diego–based Democratic consultant who managed Navarro's campaigns. "He was right about a lot of things. But he was just an a--hole."

Born in Massachusetts, Navarro grew up in Florida and Maryland, raised by his mother, a secretary, after her divorce from his father, a musician. The family was working-class. In high school, Navarro was a self-described "latchkey kid" who worked multiple jobs and slept on a sofa in a one-bedroom apartment. He earned an academic scholarship to Tufts University, then spent three years in Thailand with the Peace Corps.

Idealistic but adrift, Navarro found his calling in economic policy. While pursuing his Ph.D. at Harvard, he wrote his first book, *The Policy Game,* a screed against the "special interests" he charged with "stealing America." He argued strongly against protectionism, saying tariffs hurt consumers, threatened global stability and could lead to a trade war that caused an "unstoppable downward spiral by the entire world economy."

After receiving his doctorate, Navarro moved to Southern California, where he eventually became a professor of economics and public policy at the University of California, Irvine. His involvement in San Diego politics started with his opposition to developers, whom he saw as greedy despoilers of the environment. In his memoir, Navarro called them "punks in pinstripes" and argued that their plans would ruin the port city's character. He formed an anti-growth organization called Prevent Los Angelization Now, and attempted to parlay his activism into elected office.

Navarro hadn't always been a Democrat. Before running for office, he had been registered as both a Republican and an independent, and in his writing he professed concern that Democrats waste taxpayers' money. But he was, he wrote, "a strong environmentalist and a progressive on social issues such as choice, gay rights, and religious freedom." While Republicans seemed to "prefer the 'every man for himself' approach," Navarro believed "we ought to progressively tax the rich to help everybody else." By the time of his first campaign, in 1992, he was sure he belonged in the Democratic Party.

Navarro won the Democratic primary for San Diego mayor on his first try. He was ahead in the polls for the general election when he ran an ad attacking his Republican opponent, Susan Golding, for her ex-husband's conviction on drug-money-laundering charges. But Golding turned the tables, portraying herself as the victim of a smear campaign. Navarro's fate was sealed when, in their final debate, she tearfully recounted the pain Navarro had caused—while he smirked.

After losing the mayoral race, Navarro ran for city council in 1993 and

JUNE 22
The E.U. retaliates, imposing **tariffs on $3.2 billion of U.S. goods,** including several iconic American products: bourbon whiskey, motorcycles, blue jeans and peanut butter.

JUNE 25
Harley-Davidson announces it is **moving some of its motorcycle production outside the U.S. to avoid E.U. tariffs.** Trump responds with an angry tweet threatening to raise the company's taxes.

JULY 1
Canada imposes **tariffs on $12.8 billion of U.S. products,** including steel and aluminum, agricultural products and consumer goods.

JULY 6
The U.S. rolls out tariffs on $34 billion of Chinese goods. **China retaliates, targeting U.S. cars and farm products.** Tariffs on another $16 billion of Chinese imports are set to go into effect on Aug. 23. China promises to respond in kind.

JULY 24
Trump announces up to **$12 billion in farm subsidies** for lost export sales resulting from tariffs. A total of $27 billion of agriculture exports—such as soybeans, corn, nuts, fruits and beef—have been affected.

AUG. 10
Trump announces he will increase the steel- and aluminum-tariff rate imposed on Turkey in response to the depreciation of the Turkish lira. **Turkey responds with new tariffs on U.S. imports** such as cars, alcohol and tobacco.

county board in 1994, losing both races. Undeterred, he ran for office again in 1996, this time for a seat in the House of Representatives held by Brian Bilbray, a first-term Republican swept into office by the Newt Gingrich revolution. Opposition to Gingrich—who is today a major Trump ally—was the poll-tested theme of Navarro's campaign. He decried Gingrich's agenda, which he described as "anti-choice, anti-environment, anti–working people and anti-Medicare," and his slogan was THE DEMOCRAT NEWT GINGRICH FEARS MOST!

Navarro got a three-minute speaking slot at the 1996 Democratic convention in Chicago. President Bill Clinton, the First Lady and Vice President Al Gore all came to California to fundraise and campaign for him. In a memoir, Navarro singled out "street-smart, savvy" Nancy Pelosi for praise, but Hillary was his favorite: "gracious, intelligent, perceptive, and, yes, classy," he called her, expressing puzzlement that many Americans seemed to hate her. "Okay, so … this uppity woman has made it all too clear to Middle America that she'd rather be an activist first lady than rearrange White House furniture," he wrote. "But so what? This is the dawn of the 21st Century."

Navarro lost by 11 points. The campaign left him ruined and embittered: his wife, discomfited by public life, had divorced him, and he was deep in debt. Looking around, he saw plenty of people responsible for his defeat, from Bill Clinton to the local media to dirty campaign tricks to the "poorly informed voters who ultimately determine elections." His book *San Diego Confidential* named names and spewed insults. But he knew he bore some of the blame. In focus groups, voters found him harsh, arrogant and angry. "It's like everything is a war with him," one woman said. It was his personality, not his policies, that turned off voters, says Remer, who is puzzled by Navarro's current position. "The Peter I knew," he says, "would have had to swallow a lot to do what he's doing with Trump."

SO WHAT HAPPENED to Peter Navarro, liberal warrior? In the ensuing decades, he would make one more unsuccessful run for elected office, losing a 2001 campaign for San Diego city council. He was a supporter of Democratic politicians as recently as 2008, when he backed Hillary Clinton in the presidential primary. In op-eds and newsletters in the past decade, he called for an aggressive climate policy, including a carbon tax and a ban on incandescent bulbs, and supported a stimulus package to combat the financial crisis.

Hillary Clinton campaigned for Navarro in 1996, the year he ran for Congress as a progressive Democrat

But on trade, his views evolved. In 1998, he had written that he "strongly supported free trade." But after China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, he started to notice that his MBA students were losing their jobs despite their sterling qualifications. He concluded that China's trade practices—including export and production subsidies, currency manipulation and theft of intellectual property—were putting Americans at an unfair disadvantage. In other words, Navarro seemed to see in China a scapegoat for people like himself: well-credentialed Americans denied access to the success they felt they'd earned.

He wrote his first book on the phenomenon, *The Coming China Wars,* in 2006, followed by 2011's *Death by China* and 2015's *Crouching Tiger. Death by China* was made into a documentary narrated by Martin Sheen. And it attracted the attention of then businessman Trump. "I urge you to see it," he wrote in a promotional blurb. When Trump ran for President, Navarro heard a politician willing to take on the evils of globalism, foreign influence and China—someone who, like Navarro, was convinced America was getting screwed.

Most economists disagree with this view. They agree that China's entry into the WTO led to a period of "China shock" for the U.S. economy as a flood of cheap imports displaced American goods such as clothing, furniture, toys and electronics, leading to a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs. But experts generally believe that the shock wore off and trade with China has been a net benefit to the U.S. for the past decade or so, lowering consumer prices and opening a huge new market to American companies. Many agree with Navarro that China's state-managed economy engages in unfair practices. But virtually no economists believe tariffs are the solution. "It's a trillion-dollar coin toss," says Douglas Holtz-Eakin, a conservative economist and former director of the Congressional Budget Office. "It's a very risky approach."

PREVIOUS PAGES: THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX: JOHN GASTALDO—TNS/ZUMA

‘It’s a trillion-dollar coin toss.’

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN, a conservative economist and former director of the Congressional Budget Office, on the risks of Trump’s tariffs

Economists may disdain Navarro, but plenty of Americans agree with him, as the 2016 election showed. Both Trump on the right and Bernie Sanders on the left tapped into populist opposition to foreign trade deals. In one 2016 poll, 68% of Americans said they’d rather have an American factory that created 1,000 jobs than a Chinese-owned factory that created 2,000 jobs in their community.

Navarro joined Trump’s campaign as an economic adviser in 2016. But in the White House, Trump was initially surrounded by free traders who sought to dissuade him from imposing tariffs and pulling out of global agreements such as NAFTA. Republicans in Congress pushed Trump to focus his energies on tax cuts rather than duty hikes. The internal debate was contentious, with screaming matches in the Oval Office and bureaucratic fights behind Trump’s back. For the first year, the “globalists” seemed to prevail, marginalizing Navarro, who was reportedly excluded from many top-level strategy meetings and required to copy chief economic adviser Gary Cohn on all his emails.

Two key departures in early 2018 changed the equation. Staff secretary Rob Porter, a strong advocate of free trade, resigned in February amid accusations of domestic violence. Cohn followed him out the door in March after Trump insisted on moving forward with tariffs on steel and aluminum. “For a long time, Navarro was put in a closet where he couldn’t do any harm,” says Tony Fratto, a former Treasury Department official under George W. Bush. “But when Gary stepped down, it left a huge hole for him to run through, and he was pushing on an open door, because Trump has believed these things for years.”

Out of Trump’s earshot, Navarro is as abrasive as ever, berating and demeaning those he disagrees with and working aggressively to block contrary views from reaching the President, according to three sources in and outside the Administration. As for how the onetime environmentalist who deplored greedy corporations feels about working in a White House that has rolled back environmental regulations and enacted a massive corporate tax cut, it’s not clear. Navarro declined to be interviewed for this article. His most recent writings give few hints to his current views. Some of his past concerns are still evident: in *Death by China,* Navarro blasts greedy corporations for putting their profits ahead of jobs for American workers, and he criticizes China for polluting the environment. Navarro’s allies argue that traditional economic analyses fail to account for the destruction free trade can wreak on people’s lives. “We lost the trade war decades ago,” he told Axios in June, “once we entered into NAFTA and let China into the WTO.”

THE RESULTS of Navarro’s influence on trade are evident. China, Canada and members of the E.U. have imposed retaliatory tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars’ worth of American goods, leading to warehouses full of excess meat and a giant surplus of dairy products. The price of soybeans has plummeted, while the prices of some washing machines are up by 20%. Auto prices could soon follow. The nation’s only major television manufacturer, Element Electronics, announced it would close its factory and lay off 126 workers because of the rising price of Chinese components.

Conservative economists like Moore hope that tariffs are merely a means to an end, giving Trump leverage to negotiate deals that would result in freer markets. “In my discussions with Donald Trump, it’s been about using the tariffs as a bargaining tool,” Moore says. “In the end, he wants to get to zero tariffs.”

But Navarro has a different view. He advocates a permanent regime of tariffs, barriers and quotas to “balance” the trade deficit, discourage imported goods and encourage domestic manufacturing. The Administration’s actions, as opposed to its rhetoric, are moving in that direction. The renegotiated U.S.-Korea trade agreement that was announced in March would extend a 25% tariff on South Korean trucks for 30 years. NAFTA talks have reportedly stalled because U.S. negotiators are demanding that autos be built with 70% American steel to qualify for duty-free treatment. At the WTO, the U.S. is blocking judicial appointments to win freer rein to impose anti-dumping duties. In Senate testimony in July, Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. Trade Representative, acknowledged that the Administration was not seeking zero tariffs with the E.U.

Trump appears to like where all this is headed. “Tariffs are working big time,” he tweeted on Aug. 5, adding that the duties would enable the U.S. to begin paying off the $21 trillion national debt. Economists mocked the notion, but White House sources say it is an argument Trump gets directly from Navarro.

All this has alarmed conservatives in Congress. “I don’t think the Administration even fully knows what its trade policy is,” says Republican Senator Bob Corker, who has proposed a bill to curb Trump’s steel tariffs. “They just wake up in the morning and make it up.” GOP lawmakers, CEOs and policy mavens have paraded through the White House in a bid to persuade Trump to change course. Trump has waved them all away. He is sensitive to the idea that the rural whites who comprise his political base might not like tariffs. In July, he announced a $12 billion agricultural bailout. But he’s convinced he won’t lose their votes. At a July 31 rally in Florida, he lamented the effects of China’s actions on farmers but said they were willing to bear the pain. “Our farmers are true patriots,” Trump said. “And you know what our farmers are saying? ‘It’s O.K., we can take it.’”

Back in the 1990s, Navarro lamented Republicans’ appeal to these types of voters. They relied, he wrote, on the “fear-mongering trinity” of crime, illegal immigration and affirmative action to get the votes of “frightened seniors and white-and-angry blue-collar men.” One such politician was then California governor Pete Wilson, who was contemplating a run for President.

Navarro issued a stark warning. “This man without core beliefs,” he wrote, “wants to cynically ride a tidal wave of white male rage and anti-immigrant fervor right down the Potomac and into the White House.” Even then, he saw how well it could work. ◻

World

WITNESS TO THE AFGHAN WAR

Inside the U.S. counterassault to a shocking Taliban attack

BY W.J. HENNIGAN/GHAZNI

PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMANUELE SATOLLI FOR TIME

Americans at a military outpost inside Ghazni on Aug. 16, after the U.S. helped Afghan forces retake the city from the Taliban

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AN OMINOUS ORANGE GLOW LIT UP THE SKY FOR miles around. It was after midnight on Aug. 11, and the city of Ghazni, less than 100 miles from Kabul, was on fire. Approaching the outskirts of town in a convoy of heavily armored 22-ton vehicles, the team of Green Berets from Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) Team 1333 took it as the first sign that it wasn't going to be an easy night.

The group was one of three U.S. Army Special Forces–led units converging on Ghazni to save it from the Taliban, which had laid siege to the city over the previous 24 hours in a surprise attack. And the closer the Green Berets got, the worse it looked. Approaching the city, ODA 1333 had to muscle their massive vehicles around bomb craters and abandoned big-rig trucks that the Islamist insurgents had set up as roadblocks.

The dismal obstacle course wasn't just proof that the insurgents had the upper hand over the 1,500 Afghan police and soldiers based in the city, even though those forces were flush with sophisticated American-supplied weaponry. The team soon discovered the wreckage-strewn approach to the city had become a shooting gallery for hidden Taliban.

Rocket-propelled grenades and machine-gun fire came screaming in from a tree line to the east—small bursts at first, then all at once. Streaks of heavy fire glowed green in the commandos' night-vision goggles as two- and three-man Taliban teams shot rockets at the Special Forces before vanishing into nearby scrubland. The U.S. forces returned fire with rapid bursts from the .50-caliber machine guns perched atop the vehicles. At one point, one of the men shouted, "Where the f-ck are [the airstrikes]?" Almost on cue, a lumbering AC-130 gun ship circling above began showering 105-mm cannon fire on Taliban positions below. Apache attack helicopters, A-10 attack planes, F-16 fighter jets and MQ-9 Reaper drones also delivered airstrikes. The road into the city "was just a sh-t show," one U.S. soldier tells TIME.

A wall damaged by a Taliban mortar at a small makeshift outpost in Ghazni; two Afghan soldiers were injured

Back in Washington, the war in Afghanistan often seems like an afterthought. According to the Pentagon, combat missions officially ended in 2014, U.S. forces serve only as "advisers," and peace may be at hand. An unprecedented three-day June cease-fire was followed by secret U.S.-Taliban talks in Qatar in July. "We're seeing the strategy is fundamentally working and advancing us toward reconciliation, even though it may not be playing out the way that we anticipated," General John Nicholson, the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, said on Aug. 22.

But in August, America's 17-year enemy in Afghanistan, the Taliban, launched a coordinated set of assaults around the country ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. With echoes of the Tet offensive carried out by the Viet Cong during the Vietnamese New Year in 1968, the Taliban attack targeted vulnerable outposts peppered across seven provinces and claimed the lives of scores of Afghan forces.

The assault on Ghazni, which engulfed nearly all of the city's 19 districts, was the most orchestrated operation of this nationwide onslaught. And the Taliban's surprising effectiveness—capturing districts, nearly toppling a provincial capital and briefly cutting off the main north-south highway just 60 miles from the capital—raises troubling questions

about the state of the war. The battle was a major test of the Trump Administration's long-term military strategy, which hinges on defending population centers while ceding much of the remote countryside to the Taliban. It proved that U.S. forces still routinely rush to save Afghan forces struggling to contain a resurgent Taliban. That hard truth suggests the plan to train, advise and assist Afghans so they may one day defend themselves masks the costs the U.S. is still paying nearly two decades into the war, and a year after President Trump announced a new strategy to defeat the enemy. As Ghazni shows, the "assist" part is often difficult to distinguish from a traditional American combat mission.

Nine Americans were evacuated from the battlefield by helicopter because of injuries incurred by the Taliban's multiday barrage of roadside bombs, mortar shells and rockets. At least two soldiers received Purple Hearts after suffering serious wounds. Seven out of 10 armored vehicles in ODA 1333's convoy were lost to battle damage. The Special Forces team considered themselves lucky: a shoulder-fired rocket had a near miss with a medevac helicopter retrieving an injured soldier.

The carnage in this city of 150,000 shows how devastating the war remains for Afghans. An average of seven Afghan adults and two children were killed every day in the first six months of this year, according to the latest United Nations data, with another 19 civilians injured each day. The figures show 2018 is on track to be the deadliest year of the war. A generation of American military officers who arrived here after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks as fresh-faced lieutenants or majors have lived through the ferocious fighting. Some are now multiple-tour colonels or generals, with children who have inherited the burden of waging America's longest war. Most of the soldiers—American and Afghan—who battled to take back Ghazni were in grade school on Sept. 11 and unable to foresee the countless ways the attacks would shape their lives.

U.S. CASUALTIES AT GHAZNI BELIE THE PENTAGON CLAIM THAT COMBAT MISSIONS ENDED IN 2014

This account of the multiday siege of Ghazni, described to TIME in on-the-ground interviews with dozens of U.S. and Afghan soldiers, commanders and citizens, offers a rare glimpse into the ongoing American military effort in Afghanistan. The extent of the destruction has not been previously reported. The Pentagon doesn't make the information publicly available, and TIME witnessed it only after gaining approval for an embedded deployment in Afghanistan after months of trying, long before the August offensive began.

THE BATTLE FOR GHAZNI didn't come out of nowhere. The Taliban sensed an opportunity in the widening chaos created by years of war. For several months, five U.S. Special Forces teams, working with some 150 Afghan commandos, had left the area to fight a different threat: a growing Islamic State affiliate known as ISIS-Khorasan, or ISIS-K. An offshoot of the Syria-based terrorist group, it formed in Afghanistan in 2015 and has terrorized towns in eastern Nangarhar province through public executions, assaults on government buildings and suicide attacks.

The effort to repel ISIS-K was one of the largest joint operations ever conducted between U.S. and Afghan special forces. By August 2018, ISIS-K had lost nearly 200 fighters and most its territory. The joint mission did not go unnoticed. Over the summer, the U.S. military received intelligence that the Taliban was aware the Americans and Afghan commandos based around Ghazni were gone, Special Forces sources tell TIME.

The Taliban couldn't believe their good fortune. Moving weapons and fighters into Ghazni isn't a difficult task. There are many ways to smuggle materiel into the city, through ancient trading lines or unassuming vehicles that blend in with traffic. Some local officials believe security personnel guarding Ghazni's perimeter granted the Taliban free entry.

Despite the intelligence tip, the Taliban's initial attacks on Aug. 10 caught Washington and Kabul flat-footed. An estimated 1,000 Taliban fighters stormed the city and surrounding districts. The

A Green Beret, left, and a Special Tactics airman prepare to move toward Ghazni from a makeshift outpost on Aug. 16

insurgents attacked government buildings, assaulted the central prison, destroyed a telecommunications tower and set fire to a local television station. Afghan local police and military officials temporarily lost control of several areas of the city.

U.S. Special Operations Command headquarters scrambled to respond, deploying three 12-man Green Beret teams from 1st Special Forces Group along with their Afghan partnered force from the 2nd Commando Kandak, and conventional U.S. infantry soldiers from 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

For the men of ODA 1333 and their detachment of around 100 U.S. soldiers and Afghan commandos, the orders sounded straightforward: help secure two Afghan helicopters downed by the Taliban near Ghazni. They knew they would have to take the long way around, because the Taliban had buried so many land mines along the direct road leading into Ghazni that it was impassable. What was usually a 60-mile trip westward from Paktia province would instead cover 160 miles of terrain. The troops loaded up their weapons and clambered aboard hulking RG-33 and M-ATV armored vehicles, which rumbled into the night toward Highway 1, an ancient 300-mile two-lane road that serves as the main artery linking the seat of government in Kabul to Kandahar.

The Taliban knew the Americans were coming and where they were coming from—there was only one way in. So the militants lay in wait, armed with rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and AK-47s.

The soldiers of ODA 1333 would never reach the downed helicopters. Instead, they spent the next five days fighting hundreds of Taliban fighters in an endless series of running battles that debilitated vehicles and maimed members of their unit. "I've never seen that many [rocket-propelled grenades] in my career," says the team's sergeant, who, like others, spoke to TIME on the condition of anonymity.

In the face of recurring attacks, ODA 1333 and their attached units weren't able to breach the city until some 17 hours later. The soldiers moved to a small makeshift outpost on Ghazni's outskirts, where U.S. Special Forces teams had been based before the 2014 troop drawdown. Even there, they could find no refuge. Within 25 minutes of arriving, a mortar round arched over the perimeter and crashed through the back wall of a plywood structure where two Afghan soldiers were bedding down. The percussive thump of mortar fire shook the ground under the men, fol-

Two Afghan boys paint a blast wall in Ghazni; the Taliban attacked the city ahead of the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha

lowed by the crack of gunfire over their heads, ODA 1333's intelligence chief recalls. As the Americans and Afghans scrambled for protective cover, Apache helicopters wheeled low outside the base, hunting for the fighters responsible, blanketing the perimeter with gunfire and briefly quieting the attacks.

BY THAT TIME, the sun was out and the fighting had died down enough to set up camp. When the Afghan troops were finally able to shed their combat gear, it was clear many of them had been toddlers when the war began in 2001. Some infantry soldiers still had baby faces, unlike the bearded, tattooed Special Forces team members. All were motivated to get back into the fight. The Taliban had not seized control of a provincial capital in Afghanistan since 2015. It wasn't going to happen again on their watch.

On Aug. 12, ODA 1333 prepared to mount a counterattack. U.S. Special Forces Team ODA 1212, which arrived overnight, would also push inside the city. The teams would be further aided by 60 additional Afghan commandos and aerial footage from MQ-9 Reaper drones. The goal was to secure the government facilities, police headquarters, prison and district center under attack. The operational plan was coordinated with Afghan forces, which had incurred more than 100 casualties from two straight days of fighting. As they left the outpost and headed into the city, team members could see decomposing corpses in front of burned-out buildings.

For those who lived in Ghazni, the scene was apocalyptic. Gunfire rattled through the air, rockets hissed and airstrikes crashed in the distance. Sami Ahmadi, a 24-year-old English student at Ghazni University, gathered his family and huddled inside his basement for shelter. "We were terrified," he recalls. "Police were killed, their bodies lying in the road."

As forces pushed farther into the city, waves of citizens emerged, carrying what they could in their arms to flee the fighting. They were migrating north on foot to seek safety in nearby towns, or even onto Kabul. Behind them, small teams of Taliban were laced through Ghazni's narrow, serpentine streets.

The insurgents had stormed the prison on the southeastern edge of the city to free captured fighters, but that attempt was ultimately thwarted. Their effort to breach the provincial government building was quashed as well. But the Taliban put up a tough fight in the streets. At one point, as ODA 1333's con-

voy inched forward, three Taliban emerged from an alleyway and fired a rocket that slammed into one vehicle's machine-gunner turret, injuring the Air Force pararescue jumper manning the position. Bits of metal and debris flew into the vehicle. The air was thick and acrid. "There was so much smoke and dust," says Tamim Ahmed, the team's Afghan interpreter. "I couldn't see straight for a couple minutes."

The vehicle's other gunner turned his weapon on the Taliban fighters, who were dumbfounded they didn't kill everyone inside the truck. With a burst of fire, the gunner took out all three insurgents. But the pararescue jumper was severely wounded. A young soldier in another vehicle was also hit with shrapnel that would ultimately claim an eye. Neither man has been publicly named, but both later received Purple Heart awards, according to U.S. military officers in Afghanistan. (Despite their perilous mission, the U.S. military officially labels these soldiers as "advisers.") When a rescue helicopter arrived to evacuate the wounded, a rocket came within 150 feet of hitting it.

IT WAS CLEAR from the nonstop attacks that U.S. forces would have to stay inside Ghazni Provincial Center, a local government headquarters building, to ensure it wouldn't be overtaken. ODA 1212 split off from 1333 and established a headquarters there with Afghan forces. The soldiers stayed away from open windows and tried to remain hidden on the roof from snipers positioned just outside the facility's fortified gates, waiting for a clean shot.

Over the following two days, the Taliban switched its focus to Ghazni's less-defended surrounding areas. Afghan commando and Ktah Khas counterterrorism teams went house to house, clearing neighborhoods of Taliban fighters. It was the audacity of the Taliban's tactics in Ghazni that stuck out to U.S. soldiers. ODA 1333 and other teams had been attacked in Ghazni before, but typically in hit-and-runs—Taliban fighters would hang a mortar round or take a pot shot at their enemies, then melt in with the local population. During this siege of Ghazni, the insurgents walked the streets in broad daylight, firing on American armored vehicles, knowing U.S. warplanes were hunting them overhead. "From a military standpoint, it's not very smart," the Special Forces team sergeant says. "Because they attack and they usually die. But if they get off what they need to get off, I guess they feel like they win."

The Taliban seemed to have a limitless supply of rockets, sometimes firing 20 or 30 at a time. One after another, U.S. vehicles were knocked out of the fight. When that happened, another unit would arrive to hook up a tow rope and drag the vehicle out of the kill zone, all while exposing themselves to enemy

Nakibullah Salwary, 35, who was injured during the Taliban assault on Ghazni, sits on a hospital bed on Aug. 16

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fire. The Taliban had all that firepower inside the city, and Afghan and U.S. forces had to deal with it.

But in addition to armor, advanced weaponry and superior training, the U.S. had another major advantage: air dominance. The military said it dropped 73 bombs and missiles in the Ghazni operation. By Aug. 15, a third Special Forces team and additional units had arrived in Ghazni. Thanks to the airstrikes, the Taliban began falling back. The U.S. military said 226 Taliban were killed during the operations.

Typically, both sides declared victory. Even as the fighting drove them from the city, the Taliban bragged that it had sent a clear message to President Donald Trump that "the conquest of this city signifies the failure of yet the latest American strategy," according to a released statement. "The experience of Ghazni has proven that no defensive belts of cities can withstand the offensive prowess of the Mujahideen." In truth, the strategic value of the Ghazni attack seems to have been the tweets, headlines and video footage that rippled across social-media feeds, showing armed Taliban brazenly roaming free inside the city center. The message was clear: the Taliban remains a fierce enemy who can strike whenever they choose, regardless of peace talks and hopes of reconciliation.

From the U.S. and Afghan militaries' view, the battle was a success. Afghan soldiers, though heavily reliant on American Special Forces and airpower to turn the tide, stood, fought and routed the enemy within five days. The Afghan commandos garnered respect for their performance. "They stepped up, no doubt," says Noah Olson, a 20-year-old Army Specialist. "They want to get this over with as much as we do." U.S. military brass declared the onslaught a misfire from a fading enemy. "Tactically, operationally and strategically, the Taliban achieved nothing with this failed attack except another eye-catching, but inconsequential headline," said U.S. Army Lieut. Colonel Martin O'Donnell, spokesman for the U.S.-led international military coalition in Kabul.

Like most narratives emanating from Afghanistan, the truth lies somewhere in between. Looking at the damage inside Ghazni, it was hard for anyone to declare a true victory. Carcasses of burnt-out buildings smoldered in the sun. Stores that bristled with goods for the upcoming holiday became husks of blackened, twisted metal. "At a time like this, your neighbors are like brothers," says Said Mohammed, 63, whose restaurant managed to emerge unscathed. "We grieve for them."

The bloodshed was also apparent. At Ghazni Provincial Hospital, rooms were filled with patients of all ages who had suffered wounds in the onslaught. Dr. Abdul Basir Ramaki, the hospital's medical director, said that the dead tallied 150, with 265 more injured, as of Aug. 16. "Many were women and children," he says. "All Afghan people are tired of this violence." (A U.N. report quoted "unverifiable numbers" that put the civilian death toll at more than 150.)

THE TALIBAN HAD ALL THAT FIREPOWER INSIDE THE CITY, AND AFGHAN AND U.S. FORCES HAD TO DEAL WITH IT

Guma Khan, an elderly man with a long white beard, lay on his back in a hospital bed, recovering from a bullet wound to his left leg. "I was just walking down the street," he says. "How am I supposed to go on living here?"

Brigadier General Dadan Lawang, the commander of the Afghan National Army's 203rd Corps, told TIME that 112 Afghan military and police were killed, and 56 were wounded. He said his team was reviewing its security posture to guard against future attacks. "We need to ensure this never happens again," he says.

BUT THE AFTERMATH of the battle shows why that vow is unlikely to hold. On Aug. 17, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani arrived at the joint military headquarters in Ghazni Provincial Center. He blamed Pakistan for the Taliban attack, saying that many of the fighters were streaming back across Pakistan's borders. Islamabad has long been blamed for giving the Afghan Taliban safe harbor, and Ghazni lies near tribal regions in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces.

Ghani claimed Pakistan's military chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, had assured him over the phone that cross-border insurgent activity would not be allowed after the July 25 elections in Pakistan. "I need answers now," Ghani said. "From where did they come from and why are they receiving treatment in your hospitals?" (Pakistan denied any involvement.)

The initial success of the Taliban assault was aided by the apparent lack of coordination between Afghan security forces. The local police were running low on supplies and ammunition and had difficulty communicating, according to Afghan officers. In addition, two American soldiers told TIME that they heard that the Afghan National Army had accidentally fired on their own units, as well as American convoys. When asked about the eyewitness accounts, the U.S. military command in Afghanistan said those reports remained unconfirmed. If true, the lack of readiness suggests Afghan forces may need "assists" from the U.S. Special Forces for some time to come.

When the fighting finally died down, the U.S. soldiers were looking forward to returning to their bases in the region, where they had running water, toilets and food that wasn't prepared in a box. More than a week's worth of combat made the prospect of returning to the amenities of a long-established headquarters particularly appealing. Almost all the men had endured close calls and considered themselves fortunate to have made it out alive. "Our luck's running out," one soldier said, half-jokingly. "I still have five months here. My number's going to be called eventually." □

World

RIO'S RADICAL

Meet **Jair Bolsonaro.** He stands for law and order, traditional family values and nostalgia for an era when **a murderous authoritarian regime** ran Brazil. In October, **voters might make him President.** How did Brazil come to this?

By Matt Sandy/Brasília

Bolsonaro, photographed in his office in June, is riding a wave of disillusionment as voters turn against democracy

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL MARENCO FOR TIME

ON THE WALL OF JAIR BOLSONARO'S OFFICE IN A MODERNist annex of Brazil's Congress hang five faded black-and-white portraits. They are memoirs of a time many Brazilians would prefer to forget, when military generals ruled the country from 1964 until 1985 and the cost of insurrection was kidnap, torture and secret execution.

Bolsonaro, the de facto front runner for the Brazilian presidential election that begins on Oct. 7, is the foremost apologist for that era. He has made a career eulogizing its abuses and—for a decade after the return of democracy in 1989—calling for its reinstatement. Today he is proud of his support of the regime he served as an army captain.

Now, with Brazil mired in a profound political crisis that has left many citizens despairing of its leaders, the Rio de Janeiro Congressman—long a marginal figure—says he alone can solve the problems of the largest nation in Latin America and be trusted to protect its youthful democracy. A growing share of Brazilians are willing to take that chance.

It's hard to overstate the rage and disgust at the establishment in this country. Since the last election, a sprawling probe into corruption at the state oil giant has led to the impeachment of one President, the jailing of another and the disintegration of a fragile faith in the political class. Brazil has suffered its worst recession in history. With public services crippled by a lack of funds and rampant crime, 7 in 10 Brazilians say they have no trust in any political party.

This has allowed Bolsonaro to assume the mantle of

a strongman outsider, rallying against corruption, violence and the media. Newspapers have nicknamed him the Trump of the Tropics for his perceived similarities to the populist U.S. President. Like Donald Trump, he has struggled to find a running mate, with his first three choices turning him down. He also intends to withdraw Brazil from the Paris Agreement and weaken environmental regulations. His plans on tax, trade and debureaucratization might as well have been copied from Trump. In an interview with TIME in his Brasília office, the 63-year-old welcomes the comparison. "I'm not richer than him. That's all I do not admire," he says.

Trump may be politically incorrect, but Bolsonaro goes way, way further. In this interview alone, he advocated the possibility of unbridled state violence; equated homosexuality with pedophilia; and defended Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, whose henchmen raped women with dogs, as well as Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, who has boasted of personally killing criminal suspects.

He has a long history of invective against gays, racial minorities and women. In 2014, he told a Congresswoman, "I wouldn't rape you because you do not deserve it." Yet after spending decades in the political wilderness, the candidate for the right-wing Social Liberal Party is now being courted as a serious player in Brasília, and is feted by crowds of thousands on the road.

The pollsters' front runner in Brazil's election, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, launched his campaign from a prison cell, where he is serving a 12-year sentence for corruption and money laundering. He is highly unlikely to be allowed to run. Bolsonaro is in second place. In an election where 1 in 5 voters said they would spoil their ballots, that makes him a more-than plausible contender.

"It is one thing for the U.S. to have a pariah President, but it would be another thing for Brazil," says Anthony Pereira, director of the Brazil Institute at King's College London. The costs to its economy and world standing would be significant, he adds. "This is probably one of the biggest tests Brazil's democracy has faced."

With Bolsonaro threatening to greatly increase the military role in civilian government and radically remake the Supreme Court, former Chief Justice Joaquim Barbosa has warned of a potential military coup. Is that risk real? "Yes, of course," says the center-left Ciro Gomes, a presidential rival. "We are in Latin America."

THE BLOODY, U.S.-BACKED dictatorships that flourished across Latin America in the late 20th century have faded into history. Until Venezuela's recent slide toward autocracy, all the countries bordering Brazil were clearly—if imperfectly—democratic.

But when Jair Bolsonaro was a young man, Brazil was governed by a military dictatorship, which overthrew the elected left-wing government of João Goulart in 1964. Bolsonaro served as an army captain under a regime whose 21 years in power were marked by human-rights abuses and suppression of freedom of speech.

Brazil began the process of returning to a civilian government in 1985, but against the backdrop of economic contraction and soaring inflation. After Bolsonaro was elected to Congress in 1991, he called for the return of military rule. In 1999, he followed up by calling for a "civil war" in Brazil that would kill "about 30,000," starting with then President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. He also pledged to close down Congress if elected President. "There would be a coup the same day," he said.

Asked about those statements now, Bolsonaro says he has moved on. "People evolve. I am not a troglodyte," he says. "It's been a long time since I touched the subject."

In the early years of the 21st century, Brazil began to benefit from democratic rule. Under the eight-year presidency of Lula—once dubbed the world's most popular politician by President Obama—the economy boomed and millions were lifted out of poverty. But the country began to fall apart soon after the re-election of Lula's chosen successor, Dilma Rousseff, to a second term in 2014. Operation Car Wash, a federal investigation into the state-controlled conglomerate Petrobras, grew into possibly the world's largest corruption probe and exposed billions of dollars in breathtaking graft, igniting public anger. Scores of politicians, officials and businessmen were caught up in allegations of bribery involving cash payouts, sports cars, private jets and high-class prostitutes.

DANIEL MARENCO FOR TIME

The effects of that corruption, combined with Brazil's worst-ever recession, crippled many public services. In Rio de Janeiro, where Bolsonaro is the most popular of 46 federal deputies, police had no fuel for patrol cars, hospitals lacked basic medication and street crime soared. Public anger was enough to sweep Rousseff to impeachment in 2016 on the suspicion that she must have been complicit.

Her successor, Michel Temer, reined in the police pursuing Car Wash while twice dodging a corruption trial himself. His approval rating stands at 4%. Lula, meanwhile, was jailed in April after a prolonged televised standoff. He says his prosecution is intended to stop him from becoming President.

Bolsonaro and one of his sons, Eduardo, in June. In 2011, he said he would rather have a dead son than a gay one

As the corruption crisis and the economic downturn has played out over the past four years, Bolsonaro has found his popularity spiraling upward. Highly active on social media, he has built upon the base of police and military voters that has kept him in Congress for almost three decades. Polls suggest 60% of his supporters are under-34s, who are often highly disillusioned but too young to remember the military regime. Indeed, public opinion has actually turned away from democracy. Only 56% of Brazilians now say it is "always the best form of government." Small but noisy protests calling for military rule have sprung up.

"Although there is a certain popular outcry for military intervention, from what I see, no one in the armed forces wants to launch it, as for us it would be an adventure," Bolsonaro says. "I think politicians and the people have to find a solution for Brazil in the democratic way."

> 'This is probably one of the **biggest tests** Brazil's democracy has faced.'
>
> **Anthony Pereira**, director, Brazil Institute, King's College London

He does, however, plan to significantly increase the role of armed forces in government and society. "We intend to have 15 ministers, and about five or six would be generals, for sure," he says, citing defense, transportation, infrastructure and education. "You have to show that you want a government with seriousness." By convention, military personnel have largely stayed away from top ministerial roles since the dictatorship. He also recently proposed increasing the number of Supreme Court Justices from 11 to 21, in a move that echoes a 1965 diktat of the dictatorship.

Can he confirm he would not instigate a military regime if elected President? "No, there is no such risk. There is no such risk," Bolsonaro says. If elected, he insists, the next presidential elections would happen as normal in 2022. "The only modification I would make is to introduce paper voting, to end electronic voting. We distrust the electronic vote here. That's the only difference." So committed is he to democracy, he adds, that he is considering a "political reform proposal to limit a President to one term only, beginning with mine."

But the five portraits remain on his wall. Under that regime, nuns were raped. Men were castrated. Mothers were mutilated in the presence of their children. In 2014, Brazil's National Truth Commission found the regime responsible for the deaths or disappearances of 434 of countrymen and the torturing of at least 1,843 others. But because of an amnesty law passed in 1979, no one has ever been convicted.

For Bolsonaro, the regime was justified to maintain order and avoid a communist "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the midst of the Cold War. He advances the revisionist notion that Brazil's military regime was not a dictatorship, and suggests there was no substantial censorship of the press. "Nothing here was controlled," he says.

The hundreds killed under the regime were combatants in a war, he argues. "[The U.S.] did not kill anyone when you went to Afghanistan? Here it happened, it was combat," he says. "Look, you killed [Osama] bin Laden. Why did you not catch bin Laden alive?"

I begin to suggest the distinction might be in a dictatorship killing its own citizens. "No, no, no, no. What is the difference? What is the difference?" he says. Brazil is not the only country that had to take such extreme measures, he argues. Chile's Pinochet, for example, who killed 2,279 opponents, "did what

A supporter celebrates Bolsonaro's endorsement at the Social Liberal Party's convention on July 22

had to be done," Bolsonaro says. "Chile went forward. So much so that Pinochet has always been respected there."

DESPITE BOLSONARO'S prior support for military rule, analysts agree that a coup is unlikely in Brazil. But few believe the country would be unaffected by a Bolsonaro presidency. "[It] would be revolutionary for contemporary Brazilian society," says Jeffrey Lesser, director of the Halle Institute for Global Research and Learning at Emory University. "There is little doubt that if elected, he would seek to diminish checks and balances."

Bolsonaro has pledged to aggressively strengthen law and order in a country where a record 63,880 people were murdered last year, a rate some six times as high as in the U.S. He says he wants to loosen gun-control laws and give police more power to kill suspects in "self-defense." He adds, "Nobody wants to let a cop kill, but I want to give him carte blanche not to die." Some might say Brazilian police already kill with impunity: they were responsible for 5,144 deaths in 2017; most were young, black males. 367 police were also killed.

The high murder rate in Brazil has been driven by drug crime, an area where Bolsonaro favors a heavy-handed approach. He says Philippine President Duterte, responsible for thousands of extrajudicial executions in his war on drugs, "did the right thing for his country." If Brazil reached a similar level of violence, he says, "you'd have to take action."

He would also govern as a social conservative, and LGBT groups fear a repressive environment. Bolsonaro has stated that he would rather his son die in an accident than be gay, and would punch two men if he saw them kissing in the street. It's a position he defends in his interview with TIME. "I do not kiss my wife on the street. Why face society? Why take that into the school? Little children of 6 or 7, watching two men kiss as the government wanted them to do. Is this democracy?"

Visibly struggling to contain his temper, he asserts angrily that most gays will vote for him, and then pivots to pedophilia. "So let's respect the pedophile's right to have sex with a 2-year-old? Would that unite [Brazil]?" But, he adds, "if anyone interferes into the private life of two people, I will defend the right of those two people between their four walls. That is no problem." So he would be the President for all Brazilians? "Yes."

Gomes, the left-wing candidate currently in fourth place in the polls, says Bolsonaro's candidacy is drawing intolerance and bigotry out into the open—much as the Nazi Party in Germany did in the 1930s. Brazil must beware the "egg of the serpent of Nazism, of fascism, that we must treat as a serious threat," he says. "Of course, it is an exaggerated comparison, but the values of intolerance, hate, misogyny, discrimination against gays and women, militarism, all this is very powerfully there, galvanizing around this caricature [of Bolsonaro]," he adds.

It's hard to predict what will happen on Oct. 7, when Brazilians go to the polls in a first round of voting. Although the U.N. Human Rights Committee has asked for Lula to be allowed to run, most expect he will be banned. His center-left supporters may flock to his running mate Fernando Haddad, or Gomes, or environmental candidate Marina Silva, currently in third place. But one poll suggests that half of all Brazilians are undecided. Bolsonaro, currently polling at 21%, has a shot of reaching at least the Oct. 28 runoff vote. The presidency is within striking range.

As President, Bolsonaro would struggle to find support in Brasília. His party has only 9 of 513 seats in the lower house of parliament and none in the upper house. In 27 years in Congress, he has authored few successful bills, and has barely any allies. The pressure to form alliances might draw him closer to the center.

But the available evidence suggests that Bolsonaro is resistant to change. His opinions, and his outrage tactics, have sustained him for over three decades and are now carrying him toward the highest office in the land. He wears them like a badge of honor. Along with the portraits of the former generals, his congressional quarters are decorated with military memorabilia. "I am a captain of the army," he told journalists in 2017. "My specialty is to kill."

Did he mean that literally? No, he says, he did not see combat. "If I had participated, I would have killed someone," he adds. "I would like to have had that experience of combat. I would have liked to." ◻

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Health

PLACEBO'S NEW POWER

What the emergence of the "honest placebo" says about healing in America

BY ALEXANDRA SIFFERLIN

FOR OVER 20 YEARS, LINDA BUONANNO lived in fear that her irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) would suddenly interrupt her daily routine with frequent trips to the bathroom and unbearable cramping. Buonanno, now a 71-year-old medical assistant and hairdresser from Methuen, Mass., tried everything from drugs to dairy-free diets. Nothing worked. She remembers a particularly tough period over 10 years ago, when she was working on the factory floor of a medical-device company for up to 10 hours a day, six days a week. When an IBS episode would strike, her co-workers would cover for her as she huddled in a corner, keeled over in pain. If she wanted to go dancing with friends at the local club on Sunday, Buonanno would stop eating on

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ZACHARY ZAVISLAK FOR TIME

Friday so there wouldn't be anything in her system to interrupt her plans. "It was a horrible way to live," she says.

One day in 2009, she saw a TV ad looking for people with IBS to enroll in a study. She signed up and was thrilled when she was among about 80 people selected to take part in a first-of-its-kind clinical trial. But when she found out what kind of treatment she'd be receiving, Buonanno felt deflated: a placebo pill. The doctors told her there were no active ingredients in the pills, and the word PLACEBO was labeled clearly on the bottle. She felt she'd gotten her hopes up for nothing.

Three weeks later, after taking the pill twice daily, Buonanno was symptom-free. She had never gone so long without an attack. "I didn't have a clue what was going on," she says. "I still don't."

The medical community has been aware of the placebo effect—the phenomenon in which a nontherapeutic treatment (like a sham pill) improves a patient's physical condition—for centuries. But Ted Kaptchuk, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and one of the leading researchers on the placebo effect, wanted to take his research further. He was tired of letting the people in his studies think they were taking a real therapy and then watching what happened. Instead, he wondered, what if he was honest? His Harvard colleagues told Kaptchuk he was crazy, that letting people in a clinical trial know they were taking a placebo would defeat the purpose. Nevertheless, in 2009 the university's teaching hospital, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, launched the first open-label placebo, or so-called honest placebo, trial to date, starting with people who had IBS, including Buonanno.

The findings were surprising. Nearly twice as many people in the trial who knowingly received placebo pills reported experiencing adequate symptom relief, compared with the people who received no treatment. Not only that but the men and women taking the placebo also doubled their rates of improvement to a point that was about equal to the effects of two IBS medications that were commonly used at the time. "I was entirely confused," says Kaptchuk. "I had hoped it would happen, but it still defies common wisdom."

Now Kaptchuk and his team at the Program in Placebo Studies and Therapeutic Encounter at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center have secured a $2.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to replicate that first IBS trial. So far the researchers have treated 270 patients; they are hoping to treat a total of 340 people with IBS via their ongoing clinical trial.

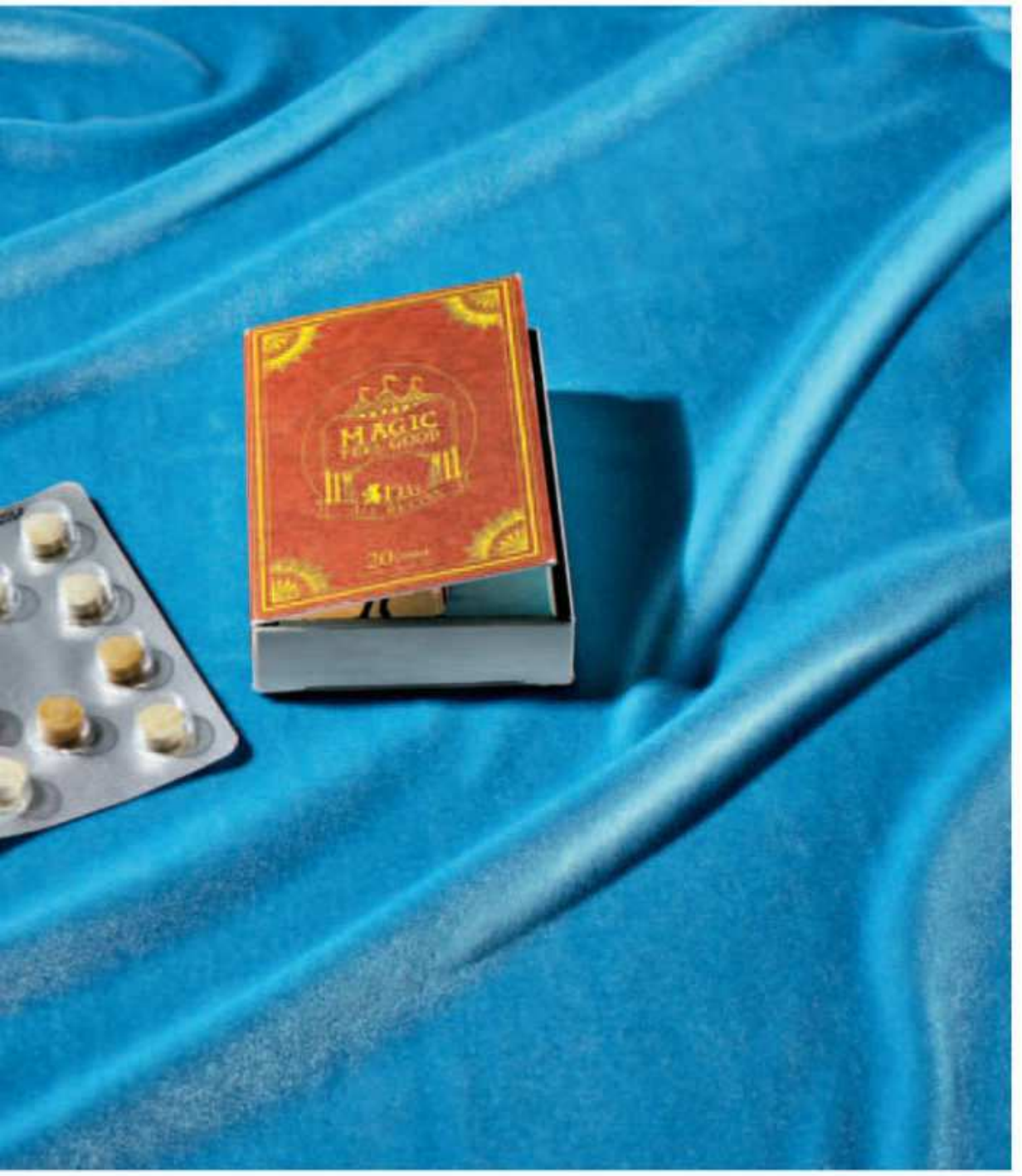
It's unclear what underlies the placebo effect. Some experts argue that the human body subconsciously responds physically and physiologically to the ritual of treatment, like Pavlov's dogs, while others argue it's the power of positive thinking. For better or worse, entrepreneurs are beginning to pay attention, and you can now buy placebo pills on Amazon for $8 to $15 a bottle. Not everyone agrees that honest placebos work. It shouldn't make sense. And yet in today's medical environment, where the sense of being cared for can be lost behind ever higher medical bills and less and less face time with doctors, it can make all the sense in the world.

THE PLACEBO EFFECT has a long medical history. In 1807, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to a friend, "One of the most successful physicians I have ever known has assured me that he used more bread pills, drops of coloured water, and powders of hickory ashes, than of all other medicines put together." During World War II, an anesthesiologist named Henry K. Beecher observed that many wounded soldiers declined morphine to treat their pain, despite the fact that civilians with similar injuries would demand it. To Beecher, this suggested that living through trauma affected soldiers' perceptions of their pain and circumstances, and that a portion of people's ability to heal must come from their own psychological expectations. Following Beecher's insights, the placebo became an instrument in mainstream clinical practice in the advent of double-blind and randomized clinical trials, in which researchers began comparing their drugs with fake medications to assess just how effective a given treatment truly was.

Today placebo is well recognized in modern medicine. Doctors at the Houston Veterans Affairs Medical Center have shown that sham surgeries—slicing people's knees open and sewing them back up without any treatment—provide the same improvements for people with osteoarthritis of the knee as real knee surgery. There's even a phenomenon known as the nocebo effect, in which people's negative expectations about something make them feel worse. Some experts believe the nocebo effect accounts for at least part of the growth in people reporting food sensitivities to gluten and dairy.

Researchers are learning that placebo has nuance too. For instance, the effect appears to be stronger if people are told a medication is hard to get or expensive, and color may also matter, with people responding better to blue pills as sedatives and white pills for pain. Still, a lot remains unknown. Some people have strong responses to placebos—including honest placebos—while others experience no impact at all, the same as happens with any treatment.

Since that first IBS study, Kaptchuk and his co-authors have shown in other research that people taking honest placebos



experienced more migraine relief than people not taking any treatment. Other researchers have found that patients who are aware they are taking placebos still see improvements in symptoms like cancer fatigue and seasonal allergies.

In a 2016 study published in the journal *Pain,* researchers including Kaptchuk randomly assigned 83 people with chronic low back pain at a hospital in Lisbon to either continue taking their pain medication as usual or start taking honest placebo pills with their typical treatment. Before the start of the study, the men and women filled out questionnaires about the intensity of their pain and how much disability it was causing them. After that, people treating their pain as usual continued to take their nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, while the people taking placebos were given bottles labeled PLACEBO PILLS with instructions to take the pills twice a day. After three weeks, the people in the study rated their pain and disability levels again. The researchers found that, on average, the group taking painkillers reported a 9% reduction in usual pain, a 16% reduction in maximum pain and no reduction in disability. But the people knowingly taking placebos experienced a 30% reduction in both usual and maximum pain and a 29% drop in disability.

Kaptchuk doesn't fully understand what's going on, but he has some ideas. "Sometimes the body knows more than the mind," he says. He struggles to find adequate analogies, but likens it to watching *Romeo and Juliet* when you know what's going to happen. If the performance is evocative enough, even though you know it's fake, "your body reacts in ways that go beyond the mind," he says. You might get a lump in your throat or tear up.

34%

Percentage of Americans who have great confidence in the country's medical-industry leaders

More important to Kaptchuk than understanding why honest placebos work is figuring out how the gain in scientific knowledge could translate into clinical practice. "Placebo has generally been denigrated in medicine, but I always wanted to figure out ways to ethically harness it," he says.

Scientists already know that the very act of being treated is enough to improve some conditions. Placebo effect may account for anywhere from 30% to 45% of response to antidepressants, for example, and a 2015 study found that the same people who respond well to placebo pills are also more likely to have better results when they take real antidepressants. But even if placebo or honest placebo can provide relief, placebos themselves rarely cure. It's unclear if the effects of a placebo can change the physiological processes that underlie a disease, even if they can ease a disorder's symptoms. A placebo cannot shrink a cancerous tumor, for example. Still, placebo treatments do appear to activate neurotransmitters in the brain that could play a role in symptom relief.

In Buonanno's case, after the initial three-week study ended in 2010, her IBS symptoms came back in full force for several years. Since she had already participated in the first Harvard honest placebo trial, she wasn't eligible to take part in one that's ongoing. Instead, Kaptchuk continues to treat her as a case study. Now, every six weeks, Buonanno drives 45 minutes for a checkup with Kaptchuk at his home clinic, where they discuss her condition and Kaptchuk gives her the antidote she's been taking for the past year: a bottle of sugar pills. "All I know is that it works," she says. "That's all I care about."

The question remains of how exactly the lessons learned from placebo trials should be embraced, and there's plenty of disagreement. Some critics argue that the concept of giving people placebo pills could eventually create a crutch, that people will assume they need a pill for every ailment. Other scientists are skeptical of the honest-placebo findings themselves, arguing that the results are exaggerated or prove only

the power of suggestion. Some critics claim the doctors must imply to people in trials that what they are taking will work, though Kaptchuk and his team insist they do not. He says his team picks conditions that have responded to blind placebo trials in the past, like back pain and migraines. They tell the participants that placebos have been shown to affect those conditions in studies in which people don't know they are taking them. They say they don't know if a placebo treatment can work if people know about it, but that's what they're testing.

"Placebo is not magic," says Alia Crum, principal investigator at the Stanford Mind & Body Lab, who is also studying placebo. "We view placebo effect as the product of your body's ability to heal, which is activated by our mind-sets and expectations to heal, and shaped by medical ritual, branding of drugs and the words doctors say."

Crum says honest-placebo research is fascinating and important, but she doesn't see doctors prescribing placebo pills anytime soon. Instead, she's interested in how doctors can get their patients into the right mind-set for medical care. "We've been pumping billions of dollars into developing new drugs and treatments without making much headway on the chronic-disease crisis," she says. "What if we spent that same time, money and effort on achieving a greater understanding of the patients' natural abilities to heal?"

In her research, Crum studies how adjusting factors in a patient's environment affects treatment. She has found that how warm and competent a doctor is when interacting with a patient can affect how that person responds to therapy.

In a March 2017 study, Crum followed 164 people who participated in an experiment in which a doctor induced a small allergic reaction on their arms through a histamine skin-prick test. All of the people developed a red swollen mark from the prick, but the size was much smaller among the people who thought their physician was highly competent and "warm"—because of behaviors like making eye contact and calling the patient by name—and who received affirmation from the doctor that a cream for the reaction would lessen the symptoms, even though there was nothing in it. What the competent doctor said about the cream—either that it would make the rash worse or better—actually affected the physical appearance of the rash too.

On the other hand, people in the study had the largest bumps when they received the same treatment but felt their doctor was cold in personality and didn't offer any assurances that the cream would help their reaction. Not only that, but what the less competent doctor said about how the cream would react with the rash made no difference at all on its appearance.

"Doctors think it's good to have patients like you to get high rating scores," says Crum. "But it's actually important in making the treatment more effective."

Kaptchuk is less inclined to view placebo effect as mind-set alone and foresees a future in which a practitioner might send a person home with a bottle of placebo pills. Like Crum, he thinks doctor oversight is a crucial part of the puzzle. But before placebo researchers have had time to figure out the balance, entrepreneurs are already on the move.

JENI DANTO, a therapist and mother of five children ages 11 to 17, created a parenting hack called Magic Feel Good, which you can buy on Amazon for $8.99. When her children were younger, it seemed that every week one child or another was suffering from phantom pain or a suspicious tummy ache before school. If she and her husband Akiva determined that the complaints weren't serious or even real, Akiva would slip into the kitchen and stir up a mixture of orange juice, grape juice and honey and then bring it to their child in a medicine cup, calling it "Magic Feel Good." "I think sometimes parents just give Tylenol," Jeni says. "It's not a judgment. It's a fact. We've all been there."

Danto realized that other parents could benefit from their strategy and in 2014 created her product: a blister pack of vitamin C–enriched sugar pills for kids' mysterious aches and pains. The pills come inside a package designed to look like a fantasy book, with labeling that says the pills should be used only for nonmedical ailments. Magic Feel Good hasn't exactly taken off yet, but Danto thinks there could be growing interest in the future.

"I think people feel better when they are validated," she says. "When someone says they don't feel good, you're validating them by giving them something."

She may be right about a missing piece in medicine. There's a reason that research in the past decade has focused on the impact of empathy in medical care, showing it can improve patient satisfaction and outcomes while also easing doctor burnout. Most Americans feel that their providers are effective, but studies show that when patients have less empathetic doctors, they're less likely to say they are satisfied with their care or follow medical advice. It's about trust too. Survey results show that only 34% of Americans say they have great confidence in the country's medical-industry leaders, down from nearly 73% in 1966. Other research shows that Americans have less confidence in the health care system than people living in other developed countries.

Uwe Heiss, a self-described placebo activist and health care transformer, also sells placebo pills online, but catering to adults. His blue and white pills are called Zeebo and contain no active ingredients. Heiss has been selling them since 2015 and says the company has sold "thousands" of bottles to consumers, health care providers and clinical trials studying open-label placebo. Still, Heiss is keeping the company going with his own funds and is looking for sponsors to continue production. He takes his own pills daily, for things like pain and stress relief. Each time he takes a placebo pill, he says, he tries to focus on an intention and describe it out loud. For example, if he's taking a pill for back pain, he might say, "I am taking this pill to relieve my mind of the suffering from back pain." He's convinced it works and has written a book on the subject.

Dr. Jesse Hoover, a doctor of Eastern

'I AM TAKING THIS PILL TO RELIEVE MY MIND OF THE SUFFERING FROM BACK PAIN.'

UWE HEISS, A SELF-DESCRIBED PLACEBO ACTIVIST

medicine in Sante Fe, N.M., is a Zeebo customer and recently began offering the pills to some of his patients. Many of his clients feel they've exhausted other treatment options and come to him for therapies like acupuncture or Chinese herbal medicine. Hoover says that so far, his patients are skeptical of placebo pills, but he thinks the pills could be another option in his tool kit.

"In modern medicine, we discount the patient," says Hoover. "Many people have the experience of talking to the doctor for five minutes, and then the doctor turns to lab work. If a patient says they don't get night sweats, a doctor will write, 'Patient denies night sweats,' as if we can't trust that the patient realizes what they are experiencing. All of this sets us up to embrace something like placebos."

The American Medical Association is wary of placebos. In its Code of Medical Ethics, the group says doctors can use placebos for diagnosis or treatment only if they have patients' cooperation, obtain patients' consent to receive a placebo (even if they don't know when they are receiving it) and if they avoid using placebo simply to "mollify a difficult patient."

"Giving a placebo for such reasons places the convenience of the physician above the welfare of the patient," the association writes. "Physicians can produce a placebo-like effect through the skillful use of reassurance and encouragement, thereby building respect and trust, promoting the patient-physician relationship and improving health outcomes."

DESPERATION IS COMMON among the people participating in the honest-placebo trials, and the simple feeling of being taken seriously seems to go a long way. Buonanno says her IBS symptoms started soon after she got divorced 47 years ago, and she thinks her disorder is partly stress-related. She says her doctors, including Kaptchuk, tell her she can probably stop taking the placebo pills and that it's unlikely she would have any problems, but after several recurrences, she is too scared to do so.

"I am the kind of person that listens to professionals, and if they tell me to take this pill and that it's going to work, I believe them," Buonanno says. "It's the combination of the mind over matter and the doctor's care. Something switches in your mind when you're desperate."

Response to any treatment is complex. Some people may be more responsive to the intention of treatment, and may do even better if therapies tap into their natural resiliency through quality doctor-patient relationships or better treatments.

"I've had patients tell me that if I told them to put on a pink tutu and dance because I thought it would help, they would do it," says Kaptchuk. "They know they are doing something totally ludicrous, but if they didn't have hope, they wouldn't get out of bed."

Kaptchuk and Crum agree that there are ways doctor-patient relationships could evolve to take advantage of some of the lessons from honest placebo trials, but that it is easier said than done in our current health care system. Time-crunched doctors don't necessarily have incentives to go the extra mile. "It's easy to bill for a medication or surgery," says Crum. "It's harder to quantify and give someone credit for the time and effort and attention and skill it takes to create relationships that are healing."

Crum and a colleague are working with Stanford Primary Care to roll out a curriculum called Medicine Plus, in which medical teams, including everyone from receptionists to physicians, learn how to create an environment that is most conducive for healing. The strategies focus on leveraging patients' mind-sets but build on the power of the placebo with the ultimate goal of helping medical practitioners harness the same forces that contribute to placebo effects alongside active medications and treatments, says Crum. Ideally, she says, one day these types of lessons should be incorporated into care much earlier, when health providers are in medical school.

Even a doctor's best bedside manner is not enough to cure someone of disease, but the new science of placebo begs the powers that be to pay attention to the small nuances of caregiving that matter. Placebo is complex, but it's not wizardry. Taking it seriously, even if it's unexplainable, may be worth the effort.

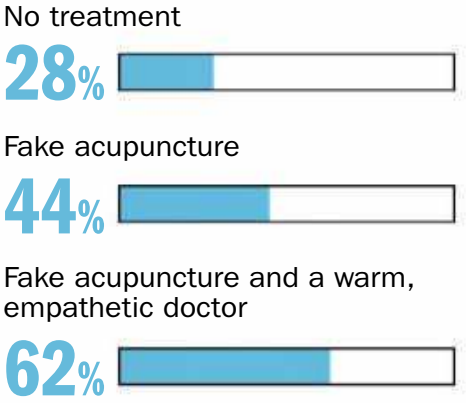
"It shouldn't come as a shock to us anymore that our minds affect our body," says Crum. "Why are we not asking what we're going to do about it?" ☐

PLACEBO HEALING

The rituals of medical care—even without drugs—may be powerful for healing, according to some studies

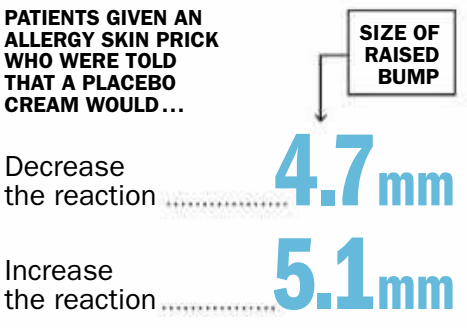
Doctor engagement

PATIENTS WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME WHO FELT RELIEF AFTER HAVING…



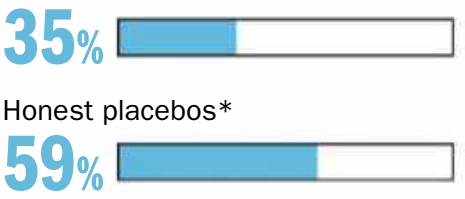
Positive expectations

PATIENTS GIVEN AN ALLERGY SKIN PRICK WHO WERE TOLD THAT A PLACEBO CREAM WOULD…



Pill-taking rituals

PATIENTS WITH IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME WHO FELT RELIEF AFTER RECEIVING…



*DESCRIBED TO THE PATIENT AS INACTIVE MEDICINE, LIKE SUGAR PILLS

SOURCES: STUDIES BY TED KAPTCHUK (TABLE 1: BMJ, MAY 2008; TABLE 3: PLOS ONE, DECEMBER 2010) AND ALIA CRUM (TABLE 2: HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY, MARCH 2017)

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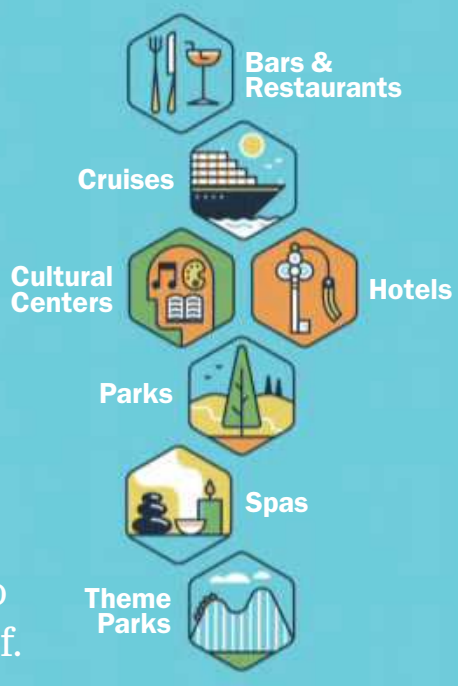
It's easy to find guides to famous attractions. But which new and newly relevant destinations are worth experiencing right now? To assemble our first annual list of the World's Greatest Places, TIME solicited nominations across a variety of categories—such as museums, parks, restaurants and hotels—from our editors and correspondents around the world as well as dozens of industry experts. Then we evaluated each one based on key factors, including quality, originality, innovation, sustainability and influence. The result is a list as diverse as the world it reflects, with 100 entries spanning six continents and 48 countries—highlighting everything from a Texas water park that empowers kids with disabilities to a Maldives resort that's building an undersea abode to a library in Tianjin, China, that's almost as wondrous as reading itself.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY STUDIO MUTI FOR TIME

REGAL REMODEL

HÔTEL DE CRILLON, PARIS

Few hotels have a history as rich as Hôtel de Crillon, which was commissioned as a palace by King Louis XV and once hosted Marie Antoinette's piano lessons. Last July, the residence—now owned by Rosewood Hotels & Resorts—re-opened after a four-year renovation that brought modern amenities like central air-conditioning while preserving its iconic 18th century finishings, including gold ceilings, grand staircases and marble walls.

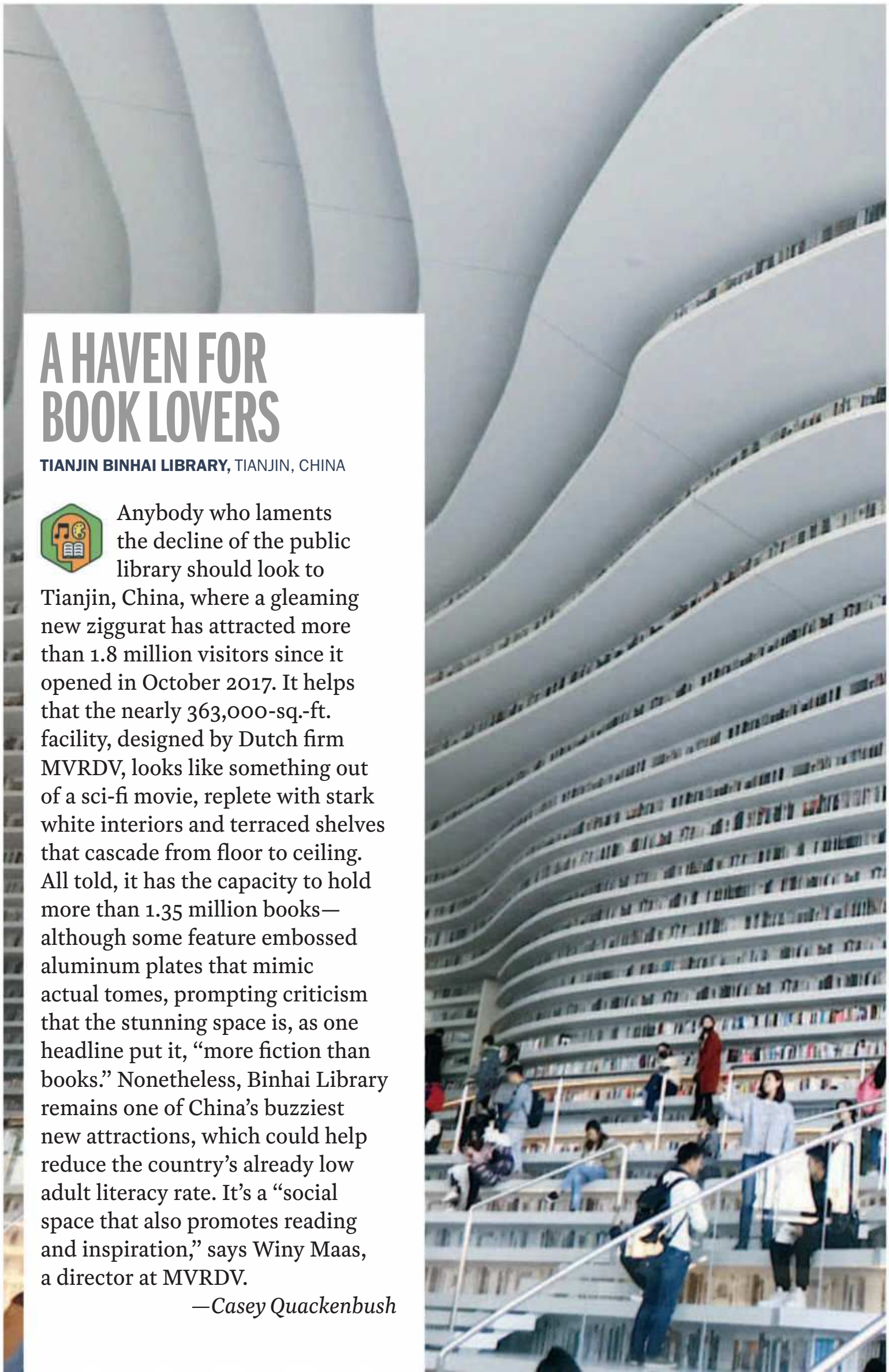
—Abigail Abrams

SMALL-TOWN WONDER

THE LOST KITCHEN, FREEDOM, MAINE

It's no easy task to turn a small Maine town into a foodie destination, and yet that's exactly what chef Erin French did with the Lost Kitchen, a 45-seat restaurant housed in an old mill. Earlier this year, demand for her seven-course, prix fixe "farmhouse" dinners (starting at $110) got so intense—almost 20,000 requests over an 11-day span—that French started accepting reservations only via postcard. (The Lost Kitchen is now full through 2018.) "As things get bigger, I'm trying to be simpler," she says.

—Ashley Hoffman



A HAVEN FOR BOOK LOVERS

TIANJIN BINHAI LIBRARY, TIANJIN, CHINA

Anybody who laments the decline of the public library should look to Tianjin, China, where a gleaming new ziggurat has attracted more than 1.8 million visitors since it opened in October 2017. It helps that the nearly 363,000-sq.-ft. facility, designed by Dutch firm MVRDV, looks like something out of a sci-fi movie, replete with stark white interiors and terraced shelves that cascade from floor to ceiling. All told, it has the capacity to hold more than 1.35 million books—although some feature embossed aluminum plates that mimic actual tomes, prompting criticism that the stunning space is, as one headline put it, "more fiction than books." Nonetheless, Binhai Library remains one of China's buzziest new attractions, which could help reduce the country's already low adult literacy rate. It's a "social space that also promotes reading and inspiration," says Winy Maas, a director at MVRDV.

—Casey Quackenbush

GETTY IMAGES

THE ALL-NEW ARBORETUM

SUNDER NURSERY, NEW DELHI

Between the pollution and the crowds, it's hard to get away in New Delhi. But now the Indian capital offers a respite: the city's first arboretum. Unveiled in February, the 90-acre complex is a horticultural haven with restored Mughal-era monuments and natural water features. The eventual goal is to link up with a neighboring zoo and fort to create a 900-acre sanctum of greenery. *—C.Q.*

DRIVING A COMEBACK

DETROIT FOUNDATION HOTEL, DETROIT

For proof that Detroit is bouncing back, look to its old, disused fire department headquarters. Last year, it reopened as the Detroit Foundation Hotel, a sleek residence that sources many of its elements—including wallpaper and minibar snacks—from local businesses. "This is a great American city," says Michael Kitchen, who helped develop the hotel, "and we don't let American cities die."

—Samantha Cooney

A KEYSTONE IN THE DESERT

KING ABDULAZIZ CENTER FOR WORLD CULTURE, DHAHRAN, SAUDI ARABIA

Its striking forms rise 295 ft. from the desert, but this is no mirage. The new King Abdulaziz Center, also known as Ithra, is a cultural hub that reflects "the changes sweeping Saudi Arabia," says director Ali al-Mutairi. Designed by Norwegian firm Snohetta, the center houses an auditorium, exhibition halls and a library of some 200,000 books. *—Casey Quackenbush*

HELPING GUESTS CONNECT

COO BOUTIQUE HOSTEL & SOCIATEL, SINGAPORE

Once travelers book stays at this hostel, which offers beds for as little as $20 a night, they can access COO Connect, an online platform that enables them to meet other guests based on mutual interests, such as food, photography and music. The goal, says founder Silas Lee, is to embody "the convivial spirit of an old-fashioned backpackers' community." *—Megan McCluskey*

MAKING SUMMER FUN INCLUSIVE

MORGAN'S INSPIRATION ISLAND, SAN ANTONIO

While on a family vacation in 2006, Gordon Hartman took his daughter Morgan to a hotel swimming pool. Morgan, who was born with physical and cognitive disabilities, wanted to play with some kids nearby, but when she inched over to them, they scrambled out of the pool. "Her look of disappointment stuck with me," says Hartman. "My wife and I asked each other: Where can Morgan go and really play?" Hartman, a successful home builder who retired at age 41, decided to answer the question himself by building a theme park, Morgan's Wonderland, which opened in 2010, and a companion water park, which opened in the spring of 2017. The words *ultra-accessible* guided the park's design, from wheelchairs that are waterproof and powered by compressed air to water areas that are set to different temperatures, for those who can't handle the cold. "Everybody can join together in play," Hartman says, noting that many parkgoers don't have special needs at all. *—Kate Rockwood*

HIGHWAY TO NEW HEIGHTS

SEOULLO 7017 SKYGARDEN, SEOUL

Snaking above Seoul's thoroughfares is Seoullo 7017 Skygarden, a new pedestrian walkway reborn from a former highway overpass, much in the vein of New York City's High Line. Its 17 sections feature family-friendly cafés, gardens and even stations for relaxing foot baths. But the structure, designed by Dutch firm MVRDV, is arguably more stunning at night, when illuminated pillars transform it into a glowing ribbon of purple. *—Suyin Haynes*

Lewanika is the only permanent camp in Zambia's Liuwa Plain National Park

A PIONEERING SAFARI LODGE

TIME + TIDE KING LEWANIKA LODGE, LIUWA PLAIN NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA

Some unique things you'll find in the burnt gold fields of Liuwa Plain National Park: the Lozi people (the only community in the country allowed to reside in a national park), packs of wildebeests (the park sees one of the largest migrations in Africa) and this lodge, which opened in 2017. The resort is solar-powered, with recycled composite floors and grass roofs. And the six villas fit only 15 guests, ensuring tranquil exclusivity. *—Kaitlin Menza*

MORGAN'S INSPIRATION ISLAND: ROBIN JERSTAD; TIPPET RISE ART CENTER: IWAN BAAN; ILLA EXPERIENCE HOTEL: COURTESY ILLA EXPERIENCE HOTEL

An oasis for the arts

TIPPET RISE ART CENTER,
STILLWATER COUNTY, MONTANA

Just over 150 miles from Yellowstone National Park, near Montana's Beartooth Mountains, lies Tippet Rise. The 10,000-acre working sheep and cattle ranch is both thrumming with art—site-specific sculptures, a concert hall, an open-air performance venue—and humbling in the wide-open vistas and vastness of the landscape and sky. "It's been our lifelong dream," says Cathy Halstead, a painter, who opened Tippet Rise in 2016 with her pianist and poet husband Peter. "Our experiences as artists compelled us to create a place where music, art and nature could be experienced in harmony with one another." In May, the duo announced the commission of a 1,900-sq.-ft. pavilion by architect Francis Kéré that will feature a log canopy

made from locally sourced lumber. "We want it to be a communal gathering place," says Halstead. Whether visitors snack or sketch, make music or small talk—well, that's entirely up to them. —*K.R.*

THE SHAPE-SHIFTER

MORPHEUS HOTEL,
MACAU

Designed by the late Zaha Hadid, Morpheus is the world's first free-form exoskeleton-bound high-rise: a grid of steel envelops 40 stories of glass with a fluidity inspired by Chinese jade carving. The interior is just as refined, with 770 rooms, a casino floor, high-roller facilities, a rooftop pool, a modern-art gallery and not one but two Alain Ducasse restaurants. —*C.Q.*

Treating visitors like locals

ILLA EXPERIENCE HOTEL, QUITO, ECUADOR

So perfectly preserved is the historic city center of Quito, with its indigenous adobe walls alongside colonial Spanish architecture, that it was among the first two cities declared a World Heritage Site in 1978. A microcosm of that rich history can be found at the boutique hotel Illa ("Sacred light" in Quechua), which opened last December. The mansion dates to the 18th century and has been carefully restored, with each of the three floors representing an era in Ecuador's history. "We added our own families' deepest traditions," says co-owner Marcel Perkins, noting that his wife's grandmother's gift with textiles is evident in the hand-woven rugs and embroidered linens. The "experience" in the hotel's name refers to the eight activities offered to guests, including watercolor painting with a local artist and Ecuadorian chocolate tasting. Staffers "share our families' way of living so [guests] can feel as Quiteños during their stay," says Perkins. —*K.M.*

Reinventing the restaurant

VESPERTINE, LOS ANGELES

Little, if anything, about Vespertine follows the rules of traditional dining. For starters, the restaurant, which opened in July 2017, is housed in a building that looks like a cross between a spaceship and a waffle. Its servers speak as little as possible, so as not to distract from the overall experience. It has its own musical score, which composers Jeremy Galindo and Christopher Royal King describe as "an aural microcosm." And its menu is full of bold flavor combinations, such as scallops with salted plum, smoked bone marrow and crystallized onion; and endive with almond, geranium, black lime and roe. Depending on whom you ask, the 18-plus-course tasting menu, which starts at $250 per person, is either crazy good—or just plain crazy. "We're a weird restaurant, because we don't fall into a specific category," says founder and chef Jordan Kahn, who refers to his establishment as a "living organism." "All we have any interest in is creating a beautiful memory for somebody." —*M.M.*

STEEL TOWN SPARK PLUG

SUPERIOR MOTORS,
BRADDOCK, PA.

Can a restaurant reinvigorate a struggling steel town? That's the idea behind Superior Motors, which opened last summer in a former car dealership after raising a record-setting $310,225 on Kickstarter. Already, its modern American food is bringing recognition to Braddock, and it says it will teach its workers—many of whom are locals who lost manufacturing jobs—new skills. "Eventually, we want to launch a full-on culinary school," says chef and founder Kevin Sousa, a Pittsburgh native. —*Alejandro de la Garza*

PYRAMID PERCH

MARRIOTT MENA HOUSE, CAIRO

Hotels often boast of sea or city views, but this one overlooks a Wonder of the World: the Great Pyramid of Giza. In February, Marriott International unveiled a refreshed version of the storied property, which got its start in 1869 as a hunting lodge before being converted into a hotel whose guests included Frank Sinatra and Charlie Chaplin. It now offers 331 suites set amid 40 acres of gardens, as well as four dining areas, a spa, a pool and an 18-hole golf course.

—Julia Zorthian

WELCOMING STARGAZERS

CENTRAL IDAHO DARK SKY RESERVE, IDAHO

Can't go to space? Try Idaho. Last year, a 1,400-sq.-mi. region in the central part of the state became the first site in the U.S.—and only the 12th in the world—to be named a Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark-Sky Association, meaning that its traits (clear air, 10,000-ft. elevation) are ideal for stargazing. Local officials pledged to take measures to limit light pollution, including shielding the tops of streetlights.

—Jeffrey Kluger

REVOLUTIONARY CUISINE

HIŠA FRANKO, KOBARID, SLOVENIA

Back in 2000, Ana Roš turned down a job as a diplomat in Brussels so she and her husband Valter Kramar could take over his family's restaurant and inn in Slovenia's Soca Valley. She hadn't been to culinary school, but no matter—in the mountains, not far from the Italian border, she set about revolutionizing the local cuisine. Those efforts paid off: this year, Hiša Franko cracked the World's 50 Best Restaurants list, confirming Slovenia's place on the map as a culinary destination. Historically, says Roš, Slovenia "has never had fine dining in its tradition." Its cuisine—a mix of Mediterranean and alpine influences—is geared toward people who "need food that is actually their energy for life," she explains. Her kitchen, by contrast, is "very seasonal, very territorial and very personal." Among its offerings: roasted pumpkin and duck with elderberries, and wild boar with hibiscus flowers and plums. *—Merrill Fabry*

Guests at the Collectionist are free to explore available rooms once they arrive

The choose-your-own-adventure hotel

THE COLLECTIONIST, SYDNEY

No two Airbnbs look alike, so why should hotel rooms? That is the thinking behind the Collectionist, a new boutique hotel that offers 39 distinct sleeping quarters, created by 20 designers and artists with themes that range from "Moroccan Circus" to "La Chambre Noir" to "Queenie Fah Fah." Guests are free to explore available rooms once they arrive and to choose the one they like best, much as they would when renting a car. "Our goal is to turn [the traditional hotel experience] on its head," says Dan Symonds, co-founder of the Collectic Hotels group.

—Eli Meixler

HISA FRANKO: SUZAN GABRIJAN; THE COLLECTIONIST: COURTESY THE COLLECTIONIST; SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS: COURTESY SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS; ECOCAMP PATAGONIA: TAYLOR MICHAEL BURK

Reinventing the hostel

GENERATOR MADRID, MADRID

Forget what you think you know about hostels. In a bid to appeal to today's young travelers, more companies are designing them to resemble high-end coworking spaces. Think private rooms, industrial-chic decor, walkability to the city's hippest hot spots, and live events like beer tastings and DJs. Leading the charge is U.K.-based Generator, which has 13 outposts across Europe (and recently opened its first U.S. location, in Miami). Its latest European edition, Generator Madrid, which opened in June, sits on the edge of the trendy Malasaña district and boasts a bar, a rooftop lounge with whirlpool baths and even a quirky origin story: the building itself, which was built in the 1930s, has also been a parking garage and a gas station. As with all hostels, though, the most attractive feature is price: beds in shared rooms at Generator Madrid start at $11, far less than traditional hotels. *—Kate Rockwood*

Generator's boutique hostels feature private rooms, industrial-chic decor and more

Setting records at sea

SYMPHONY OF THE SEAS

As the world's largest cruise ship (twice as high as the Washington Monument), Royal Caribbean's *Symphony of the Seas* certainly has room to pack in the superlatives, including the world's tallest at-sea slide (the 10-story Ultimate Abyss) and the largest at-sea spa and fitness center. Designing those elements so they could be enjoyed by the 6,680 passengers on board—without creating crowds—was no small feat. Royal Caribbean built on lessons learned from its other megaships, like carving out distinct "neighborhoods"—like the Boardwalk, with its full-size, hand-painted carousel—and putting Central Park, the bigger-than-a-football-field open-air garden, smack in the center of the ship. It creates the illusion of being surrounded by fauna, even when guests are hundreds of miles from the nearest sliver of land. *—K.R.*

STAY LIKE A CHEF

CASA TEO, MEXICO CITY

When chef Enrique Olvera moved his famous restaurant, Pujol, to a larger location, he couldn't bear to part with the building where he made his name. So he turned the original space into Casa Teo, a boutique bed-and-breakfast designed to house visiting chefs. But nonchefs are welcome to book stays too; perks include sightseeing recommendations from Olvera's team and the option to organize a tasting dinner in Casa Teo's private dining room, cooked by a chef from his team. *—Abigail Abrams*

DINNER IN 4-D

ULTRAVIOLET, SHANGHAI

Four-dimensional dining? That's the aim of Ultraviolet's 20-course dinners, set in a windowless room outfitted with visual and audio systems to create an experience in which every dish is paired with different sounds, images and scents—"psycho tasting," as French chef and founder Paul Pairet calls it. Opened in 2012, the restaurant was just upgraded from two to three stars in the 2018 Michelin guide to Shanghai. *—C.Q.*

AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD THRILL

ORIENTAL SCIENCE FICTION VALLEY, GUIZHOU, CHINA

China's first virtual-reality theme park, which opened in April, is an extraterrestrial enclave whose centerpiece is a 174-ft.-high Transformer-like robot. But the real magic happens inside: the park will eventually feature 35 virtual- and augmented-reality attractions, enabling guests to battle aliens on distant planets, fly through Guizhou and more. It's all part of founder Shi Xiangdong's mission "to inspire dreams in science and technology." *—Casey Quackenbush*

GLAMPING MADE GREATER

ECOCAMP PATAGONIA, TORRES DEL PAINE, CHILE

EcoCamp Patagonia has won raves since its 2001 opening for offering guests the ultimate glamping experience: by night, they sleep in luxe domes based on ancient nomadic designs; by day, they go on guided treks. More recently, the hotel—which is fully powered by renewable energy—has focused on inclusivity, adding hikes for visually impaired guests and an all-terrain wheelchair that can traverse the Patagonia landscape. *—J.Z.*

SKIER'S PARADISE

SNOW BEAR CHALETS, WHITEFISH, MONT.

At these chalets, which opened last September, the ski-in, ski-out convenience is only half the draw. The rest is the whimsical design aesthetic, which owner Gail Goodwin describes as *Harry Potter* meets *Hansel and Gretel*—think wood paneling, turrets and murals of constellations on the ceiling. "I wanted people who were skiing to stop and say, 'I need to see that,'" she says. *—Samantha Cooney*

AN ODE TO SCIENCE

EXPERIMENTARIUM, HELLERUP, DENMARK

A giant copper spiral staircase, designed to look like DNA, sets the tone for this science museum, which reopened in 2017 after an extensive renovation. Guests can now dive in to a virtual submarine safari, zoom in on the world of microorganisms or travel through the Tunnel of Senses to explore hearing, sight, touch and smell. And, of course, no visit is complete without creating your own bubbles in the Bubblearium. *—Abigail Abrams*

A 'DIVINE' LANDMARK

GOLDEN BRIDGE, BA NA HILLS, VIETNAM

The two massive stony hands emerging from the mountains of central Vietnam may look mossy and cracked like ancient ruins, but don't be fooled: they're brand-new wire mesh and fiberglass supports for a striking footbridge that opened in June. The Cau Vang, or "Golden Bridge," soars 3,280 ft. above sea level in the Ba Na Hills, where it connects a cable-car station to popular nearby gardens. The structure itself is made of timber with stainless-steel railings treated to appear gold; TA Landscape Architecture, the Ho Chi Minh City–based firm that led the bridge's design, has likened it to the "giant hands of Gods" cradling a golden thread. The 500-ft.-long expanse gives visitors plenty of space to take in the scenic views. It's all part of an effort to bring more tourists to the country. *—Julia Zorthian*

A STELLAR SWEAT

LÖYLY, HELSINKI

"There's nothing more Finnish than a sauna," says Jasper Pääkkönen, co-founder of Löyly, which opened in 2016 and is the leading place to perspire in a city spoiled for choice. The striking waterfront facility uses wind and hydropower, as well as sustainably sourced timber; its draw is similarly au naturel. "There's no hierarchies" in a sauna "because you're at your barest—literally," Pääkkönen says. A two-hour session costs $22. *—Eli Meixler*

Awasi Iguazú is located just 20 minutes from the world's largest waterfall system

RAIN-FOREST RETREAT

AWASI IGUAZÚ, PUERTO IGUAZÚ, ARGENTINA

Five-star luxury 20 minutes from the world's largest waterfall system? That's the promise of Awasi Iguazú lodge, which opened this year deep in the Argentine rain forest; its 14 villas (which start at nearly $1,000 per person per night) each come with a deck and plunge pool. Besides the falls, guests can visit 18th century Jesuit ruins at San Ignacio Miní and local Guarani tribal communities, and then unwind with locally inspired seasonal dining created by chef Aarón Castillo Tellería. *—J.Z.*

GOLDEN BRIDGE: GETTY IMAGES; TREEHOTEL: JOHAN JANSSON; ATLAS BAR: WALLACE WOON—EPA-EFE/SHUTTERSTOCK

Building a better tree house

TREEHOTEL, HARADS, SWEDEN

Tree houses aren't generally synonymous with splendor. But the seven elevated cabins at Sweden's Treehotel—located in a tiny village in the country's Arctic region—could easily give the Swiss Family Robinson a run for its money. For starters, there are the extraordinary exteriors: one resembles a UFO, another resembles a bird's nest, and the bottom of the latest edition—the aptly named 7th Room *(right),* which opened in 2017—features a life-size photograph of the canopy view it displaced. Inside, the cabins, which start at just under $500 per night, are more refined, with sleek, minimalist furniture and cozy lounge areas.

Although some guests may have to travel to a separate facility to shower, fans argue that that's a small sacrifice to make for a one-of-a-kind camping experience, especially when it's under the Northern Lights. —*S.C.*

Raising the bar

ATLAS BAR, SINGAPORE

Like gin? Then make haste for Singapore's recently renovated Atlas Bar, which features about 1,000 varieties of the spirit, some dating to 1910. The 7,400-sq.-ft. facility, set in Singapore's Gothic-looking Parkview Square office tower, is an Art Deco throwback—*The Great Gatsby* as conceived by the Hong Kong property mogul C.S. Hwang. His granddaughter Vicky says that the refurbishments were "intimidating," but the hard work appears to have paid off. The Atlas now occupies the No. 15 slot on this year's World's 50 Best Bars List, helped in no small measure by its gin collection, which is one of the world's largest. "We wanted to be a center of excellence for gin," Hwang says. "A place where those who were gin enthusiasts or simply gin-curious could come, enjoy and learn a bit more." —*Suyin Haynes*

A taste of history

EIGHT TABLES, SAN FRANCISCO

George Chen has opened more than a dozen restaurants, including the James Beard Award–nominated Betelnut, but Eight Tables has been lauded as his most ambitious one to date. It stars a 10-course, high-end showcase of *sifang cai,* or private chateau cuisine, an experience popular during the Qing dynasty, when Chinese elite had private chefs and would invite friends to their homes for grand and elegant meals. The $225 meal starts, for instance, with nine small bites representing the nine essential flavors of Chinese cuisine, ranging from sweet (dates stuffed with chrysanthemum honey) to spicy (beef tendons topped with Sichuan peppercorns) and is studded with luxurious ingredients, like foie gras and caviar. To evoke a private chateau, Chen hired design firm AvroKO. The studio skipped the usual bar area for a bar cart, hung photos of Chen's father and grandfather in the reception area, and carved out a semi-private room for each of the eight tables. —*Kate Rockwood*

UNDERSEA IMMERSION

PONANT LE LAPÉROUSE

Ponant's new cruise ship may have Hermès bath products, a Michelin-starred chef and 24-hour butlers, but its most striking feature is below deck. A multisensory underwater lounge, dubbed the Blue Eye, features two large portholes just below the water line, allowing daylight to illuminate the marine life below, as well as hydrophones, which pipe in the natural clicks, calls and trills of the underwater world. "Body Listening" sofas vibrate discreetly in time to the underwater orchestra. —*K.R.*

AN ECO ADVENTURE

HOTEL XCARET, RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO

This resort, which opened in December, is the first in Mexico to earn an "EarthCheck" certification for its sustainability efforts, such as following a strict composting program and donating to wildlife conservation efforts. Should guests tire of its on-site amenities—spa treatments, pools, restaurants—they can take a free shuttle to XCaret's eco theme parks, which offer activities like zip-lining and snorkeling. —*S.C.*

RACING TO ZERO

BIO, SÃO PAULO

Brazilian chef Alex Atala opened his latest São Paulo eatery with a promise to patrons (low prices) and a challenge to staff: strive to reduce the food waste to zero. So far, Bio is succeeding on both counts. Most menu items are under $15, and "every day, we find new ways to use more ingredients," says chef Raúl Godoy. Among them: making pesto with discarded avocado pits instead of pine nuts, and roasting papaya and watermelon seeds to make dry spice rubs.

—Ashley Hoffman

MAKING OLD THRILLS NEW

TIVOLI GARDENS, COPENHAGEN

Tivoli Gardens, the world's third-oldest theme park, first opened in 1843. But it continues to innovate—most notably with the Fatamorgana, a first-of-its-kind 148-ft. tower that's actually three rides in one. The tower spins at two speeds (one for dizzying thrills, one for scenic views), and at its base are bumper cars. It's one of several attractions Tivoli has opened to mark its 175th anniversary.

—Gabby Raymond

SPLENDOR MEETS SUSTAINABILITY

SIX SENSES FIJI, MALOLO ISLAND, FIJI

It's a rare indulgence that feels altruistic. And Six Senses Fiji, which opened in April, is definitely indulgent: guests can lounge on white-sand beaches, enjoy heated lava-shell massages and 24-karat-gold-leaf facials and also explore reefs under crystal-clear Pacific waters, with room rates starting at about $940 per night. But the resort is also committed to keeping Fiji pristine. Its facilities are 100% solar-powered, and its food waste fertilizes a working farm, which grows ingredients for meals prepared by private chefs. Management also prioritizes hiring Fijian tourism students, and rooms are stocked with goods made by women in isolated communities via an NGO program to help them achieve financial self-sufficiency. Most guests choose to arrive by speedboat or helicopter, since the resort is on Malolo Island, which is 20 miles off the coast of Fiji. For those who really want to make an entrance, there's also an option to skydive. *—Eli Meixler*

Six Senses Fiji is on Malolo Island (right), which is 20 miles off the coast of Fiji

JEREMY AUSTIN AND ANGIE VILLA

A library beyond books

AUSTIN CENTRAL LIBRARY, AUSTIN

At this library, which opened in 2017, the books—500,000 in total—are just the beginning of the story. There's also an art gallery, an event space, a rooftop butterfly garden, a series of group-study rooms, a café (featuring several cookbook-inspired meals) and a "technology petting zoo," which enables visitors to toy with next-generation gadgets, like a 3-D printer. The building itself—which centers around a six-story, sun-drenched atrium—is cutting-edge too. In July, it earned a Platinum LEED certification for its sustainable design, which includes a bicycle-repair and parking garage and a cistern on the roof that pipes rainwater to the bathrooms.

—Julia Zorthian

Modernizing history

THE GREY, SAVANNAH, GA.

Born in the Bronx to a Georgian mother, Mashama Bailey grew up calling herself "one-generation-removed Southern." But even after her co-workers inspired her to attend culinary school—they often complimented her sweet potatoes and roasted chicken—she never toyed seriously with the idea of moving south to open a restaurant. Then venture capitalist Johno Morisano heard about Bailey through her mentor, chef Gabrielle Hamilton, and reached out to her about a long-abandoned, once segregated Greyhound station he'd bought. The duo clicked, and Bailey eventually abandoned her more traditional concepts ("the inspiration of the early menu was purely Italian," she says) in favor of blending African, European and classic Southern flavors they now serve (foie and grits with red-wine gravy, or tuna crudo with okra and pickled peppers). Those efforts paid off: in 2017, the Grey was named Eater's Restaurant of the Year. *—Kate Rockwood*

THE ARTFUL ESCAPE

JACKALOPE, MERRICKS NORTH, AUSTRALIA

It's easy to luxuriate at this boldly remodeled 143-year-old homestead, located on a vineyard in Australia's Mornington Peninsula. But the hotel's most memorable feature may well be the art, including a 10,000-bulb chandelier meant to evoke the champagne-fermentation process, and the namesake sculpture—a 23-ft. ode to the mythical jackalope (a rabbit with antelope horns). *—Eli Meixler*

REPURPOSING THE PAST

TAI KWUN, HONG KONG

Hong Kong's largest-ever restoration project, which opened this summer, is a complex of 16 former police and judicial buildings—some of them 150 years old and all relics from Hong Kong's days as a British crown colony—revitalized as a complex for the city's arts and culture. Visitors can have a drink in the former jail or watch a Shakespeare play in a onetime prison yard, among other activities. *—Casey Quackenbush*

NEXT-GEN ACOUSTICS

ELBPHILHARMONIE, HAMBURG

As visually striking as the Herzog and de Meuron–designed concert hall is—a glass tower perched atop a giant brick warehouse, surrounded on three sides by water—it's the acoustics that steal the show at Elphi (as the locals call it), which opened in 2017. The central auditorium is covered in 10,000 gypsum-fiber white acoustic panels, each with a unique series of divots that scatter or absorb sound. No two panels are alike, but together the undulating, interlocking panels create an optimal sound map across the entire auditorium. The result is a richer, better sound for those occupying the 2,150 seats surrounding the stage. Acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota is even more focused on the response from the performers. "The more time they spend in the hall, the better their ensemble becomes since they can hear themselves and each other more." *—Kate Rockwood*

ELBPHILHARMONIE: TODD ROSENBERG; WILDERNESS SAFARIS BISATE LODGE: CROOKESANDJACKSON

Spotlighting indigenous artists

SKWACHÀYS LODGE, VANCOUVER

Although Canada's indigenous population has exploded over the past decade, its cultural contributions are often overlooked. Not so at Skwachàys Lodge, a boutique hotel—featuring 18 guest rooms and a rooftop sweat lodge—that provides affordable housing to 24 First Nations artists, who work and live on-site. The result is a facility that immerses guests in Native art—they can take classes on beading, tribal art and spoken-word poetry—and also empowers the people who create it. Skwachàys has already used hotel profits to launch an in-house gallery space; soon, it will start helping indigenous artists sell their crafts online. *—Abigail Abrams*

In addition to being a hotel, Skwachàys Lodge provides housing to indigenous artists

Bringing guests to gorillas

WILDERNESS SAFARIS BISATE LODGE,
VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, RWANDA

Kenya is known for its lions and big cats, while Botswana and South Africa are no-brainers for elephants. For gorillas, however, travelers can head to Rwanda, where the 35-year-old company Wilderness Safaris opened Bisate Lodge in June 2017. Comprising just six villas perched high above Volcanoes National Park, the lodge invites guests on daily treks where a face-to-face encounter with families of ambling primates is all but guaranteed—baby gorillas are known to reach out to touch visiting humans. While stays aren't cheap—they run from $1,150 to $1,650 per person per night—part of the rate goes to reforestation and conservation efforts, and the Rwandan government reserves 10% of wildlife permit fees, which are separate from the lodge fees, for contributions that go back to local villages. *—Kaitlin Menza*

SPONSORED CONTENT

Where Luxury Meets Nature

Blue Lagoon Iceland transforms a natural wonder into a truly unique experience.

From massive glaciers to expansive lava fields, Iceland boasts some of the most impressive natural wonders in the world. Located in the heart of its volcanic frontier, the Blue Lagoon is no exception.

Just a 15-minute drive from Keflavík International Airport, the Blue Lagoon gives travelers the rare opportunity to relax in its rejuvenating, mineral-**rich geothermal waters.**

"Water is found all over the planet, but there **is no water quite as unique as Blue Lagoon's geothermal seawater,"** says Grímur Sæmundsen, CEO and founder of Blue Lagoon Iceland. "Collectively, the waterscape and the landscape **unlock sensations and emotions that many** visitors find to be unforgettable."

This inspiring destination, which provides the perfect combination of luxury, relaxation and nature, recently unveiled the Retreat at the Blue Lagoon, the property's 62-suite luxury hotel carved directly into an 800-year-old lava flow on the Blue Lagoon's west bank. The five-star hotel includes the remarkable Moss Restaurant as well as a subterranean spa and a terraced lagoon that flows through a concourse of lava canyons.

"Our primary aim as a company and destination," Sæmundsen says, "is to transform natural wonders into unique experiences."

BLUE LAGOON
ICELAND

CELEBRATING LOCAL CULTURE

ATIX HOTEL,
LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

More evidence that the Bolivian capital is emerging as a hot destination: its first boutique hotel opened in 2016. The Atix aims to embody local culture, from its sleek design (featuring Bolivian wood and Comanche stone) to its name (meaning "One who thrives" in Quechua). Its 53 rooms are decorated with colorful artwork curated by local galleries, and chefs at the in-house restaurant, Ona, serve modern takes on native dishes.

—Julia Zorthian

FAR-OUT FOOD

KOKS, LEYNAVATN, FAROE ISLANDS

When Poul Andrias Ziska became head chef at this modest eatery in 2013, he set out to elevate the cuisine of his native archipelago. Since then, he's been serving up fresh takes on Faroese favorites—everything from fermented lamb tallow to stuffed seabird—to international acclaim. Last year, Koks became the first Faroe Islands restaurant to receive a Michelin star.

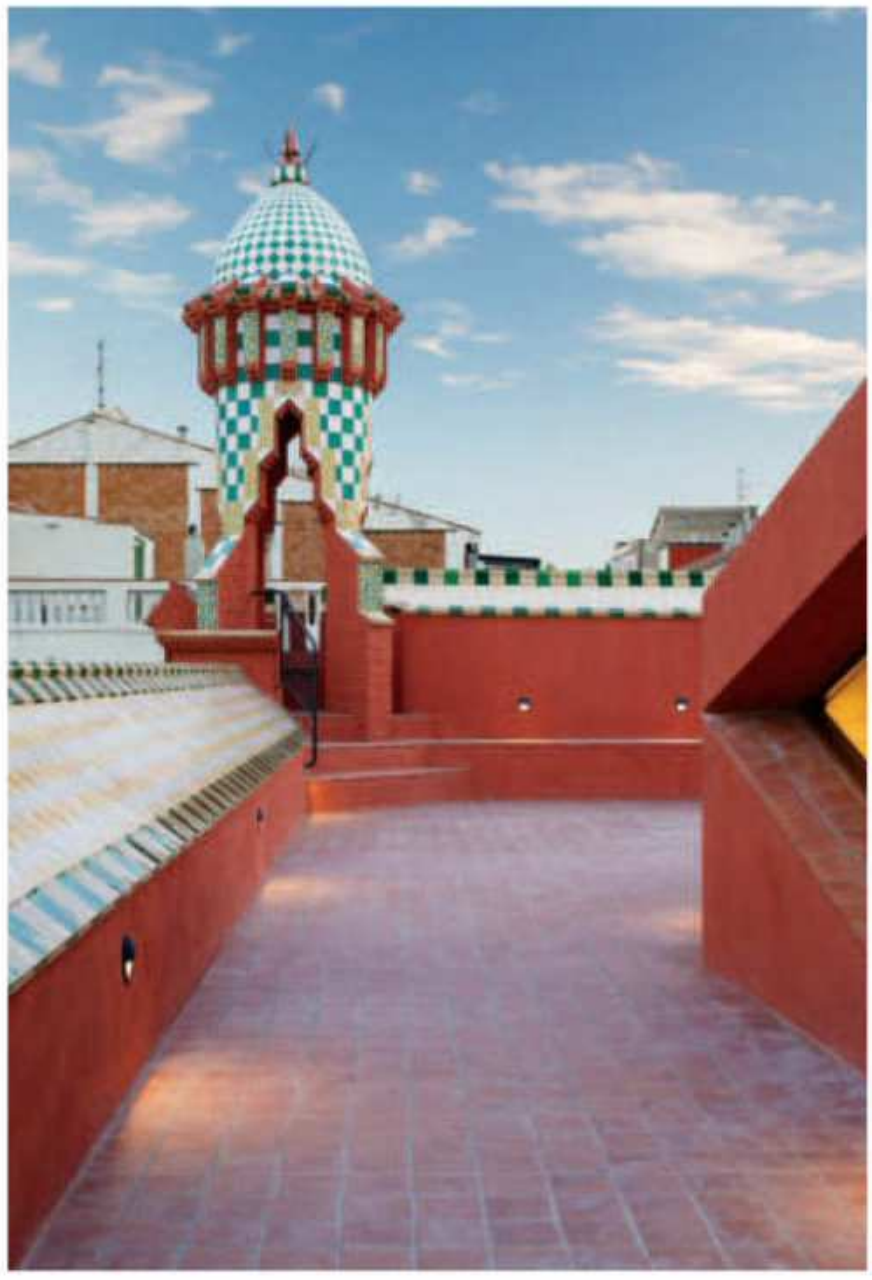
—Wilder Davies

A LANDMARK UNVEILING

CASA VICENS, BARCELONA

Perhaps no city is so closely linked to a single architect as Barcelona is to Antoni Gaudí, whose whimsical landmarks such as Parc Güell and La Sagrada Familia have drawn millions to the capital of Catalonia. And yet, his first home project—the privately owned Casa Vicens, built between 1883 and 1885—was largely off-limits to visitors. That all changed in November, when its new owner, the Andorra-based MoraBanc, reopened the residence as a museum. Now visitors can tour the UNESCO World Heritage Site, which has been restored to evoke its original splendor—including glazed ceramic facades, lush gardens and a rooftop beveled by colorful tiles.

—Alejandro de la Garza



Disney World's newest arena includes a botanical garden that emits a dazzling neon glow after dark

Bringing *Avatar* to life

PANDORA: THE WORLD OF AVATAR,
BAY LAKE, FLA.

Just as James Cameron's sci-fi epic *Avatar* marked a new level of technological innovation for movies, so too is Pandora: The World of Avatar reinventing the modern theme park. Among its other-worldly attractions: an animatronic character that's "as lifelike as possible" and a botanical garden that glows with neon after sunset. The park's flagship is Flight of Passage, a ride that combines 3-D projections and virtual reality to create the illusion that guests are flying atop a living, breathing mountain banshee (a creature that figures prominently in Cameron's mythical universe). The park says it's the highest-rated attraction at Walt Disney World, per guest surveys.

—Megan McCluskey

CASA VICENS: POL VILADOMS; PANDORA: STEVEN DIAZ—DISNEY; INTERNO: KIKE CALVO—REDUX; ICEHOTEL 365: COURTESY ICEHOTEL 365

A new home for African art

ZEITZ MOCAA, CAPE TOWN

Hailed as "Africa's answer to the Tate Modern" when it opened last September, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (MOCAA) is the world's largest museum dedicated to contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora, featuring approximately 70,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space and a rooftop sculpture garden. But it's nearly impossible to take in the artwork—including cowhide sculptures of the female form by South Africa–based artist Nandipha Mntambo and multimedia installations from Zimbabwean artist Kudzanai Chiurai—without also being wowed by the space, which was until recently a complex of abandoned grain silos. A team of architects led by Heatherwick Studio carved through the 42 100-ft.-tall concrete tubes that comprised the facility's structure, transforming it into a cathedral-like space bathed in light from more than 100 faceted glass windows. At Zeitz MOCAA's opening ceremony, Archbishop Desmond Tutu pretended to take a phone call from heaven, chatting with former President Nelson Mandela. "Yes!" Tutu said Mandela told him. "This is what we were fighting for!" *—Kate Rockwood*

Zeitz MOCAA turned a complex of abandoned grain silos into a modern-art museum

Serving more than meals

INTERNO, CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

With its pink steel bars, exposed brick and piping, and wall paintings of jungle plants, Interno could be any other hip Colombian restaurant. But the employees inside aren't just prepping food—they're serving time. The 60-seat restaurant is located in a cordoned-off area of Cartagena's San Diego prison, a minimum-security facility that's the last stop for women before they're released. Since opening in December 2016, it has helped dozens of inmates learn skills designed to aid reintegration into society—including everything from cooking (some trained under Michelin-starred chef Koldo Miranda) to customer service—while earning praise for its locally sourced dishes, such as ceviche in coconut milk and *posta cartagenera,* a Colombian beef dish. Now Acción Interna, the inmate-advocacy group that runs Interno, says it plans to open a sister restaurant, Externa, staffed by former prisoners. *—Ashley Mateo*

PAYING IT FORWARD

WYNDHAM GRAND RIO MAR, RÍO GRANDE, PUERTO RICO

In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, this beachfront resort—which was severely damaged during the storm—extended its rebuilding efforts to the surrounding community, helping to clear blocked roads and offering food and transportation to volunteers. When it reopened in March, it donated a portion of its booking fees to help restore the neighboring El Yunque National Forest. *—A.G.*

AN ODE TO UPCYCLING

CHANGCHUI: CREATIVE PARK, BANGKOK

This 290,000-sq-ft. marketplace is an exemplar of upcycling, featuring stalls, a cinema and eateries made from salvaged zinc panels and old doors. There's even a fine-dining restaurant housed in a disused Thai jet. "I believe that nothing is useless if creativity is applied," says founder Somchai Songwatana. Since opening in June 2017, the attraction has lured almost a million visitors. *—Casey Quackenbush*

TAKING LOCAL STANDOUTS GLOBAL

INDIAN ACCENT, NEW DELHI

New Delhi standard bearer Indian Accent has made Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list for six years running, thanks to chef Manish Mehrotra's inventive Indian cuisine—think pulled-pork phulka tacos, blue-cheese naan and galautis stuffed with foie gras. Now the brand is going global: its New York City outpost debuted to rave reviews in 2016, and last year a third Indian Accent opened in London.

—Joseph Hincks

WINTER WONDERLAND

ICEHOTEL 365, JUKKASJÄRVI, SWEDEN

There's no hotel quite like Sweden's new Icehotel 365, whose suites—featuring ice sculptures of animals, staircases and more—remain open all year. To prevent melting, the structure relies on solar-powered controls, which keep temperatures at 23°F. By day, guests can unwind in a hot sauna or take a dogsled ride; by night, they can sip on arctic-inspired cocktails at the hotel bar, which is also made of ice.

—M.M.

HARNESSING HYDROPOWER

IVEAGH GARDEN HOTEL, DUBLIN

Although Iveagh offers plenty of guest perks—a central location, views of lush surroundings—its greatest feature lies below the surface: the new hotel, housed in a 20th century bank building, has been retrofitted to source all of its energy from an underground river. Manager John Pardy says the changes decreased their energy usage by 78%, making it one of the most sustainable hotels in Europe.
—Samantha Cooney

RACING ON WATER

NORWEGIAN *BLISS*

If this ship's 984-ft. go-kart track, the longest at sea, sounds like something a kid might concoct, that's because it is: the idea originally came via the grandchildren of Frank del Rio, CEO and president of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings. But this $1 billion, 4,000-guest ship, which took its inaugural journey to Alaska in June, offers attractions that cater to adults too, including an onboard casino and a 20,000-sq.-ft. observation lounge.
—Alejandro de la Garza

THE ON-SITE SAFARI

GIRAFFE MANOR, NAIROBI

Who needs the zoo? At this Kenyan retreat, guests can get up close and personal with a local herd of Rothschild's giraffes that roam the grounds—140 acres of indigenous forest—and even pop their heads into the main dining room during meals. The estate has served as a sanctuary for the endangered subspecies since the mid-1970s, when it was purchased by conservationist Betty Leslie-Melville, who established a breeding program that continues today. Since then, its 12 stately bedrooms—one of which is furnished with the belongings of *Out of Africa* author Karen Blixen—have hosted thousands of visitors, including Mick Jagger, Brooke Shields and Ellen DeGeneres, whose stay (and accompanying Instagram posts) made headlines earlier this year. Rates start at $565 per person per night, including food and transport to local excursions, such as the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, where guests can help care for orphaned baby elephants. *—Megan McCluskey*

COURTESY THE SAFARI COLLECTION

EMPOWERING REFUGEE CHEFS

EMMA'S TORCH,
BROOKLYN

"Food can do more than nourish us—it can change lives," says Kerry Brodie of her eatery, whose menu is crafted almost entirely by refugee chefs from around the world. The goal is both to expose diners to new dishes, such as black-eyed pea hummus, and to empower the people who cook them: after a two-month paid apprenticeship, which includes English lessons, graduates are connected to other New York restaurants for full-time jobs.

—Ashley Mateo

PORTAL TO THE PAST

AL-QARAWIYYIN LIBRARY,
FEZ, MOROCCO

This 14th century library that grew from a 9th century mosque and university, founded by an heiress, Fatima al-Fihri, was once "the soul of the city," says Fez-born architect Aziza Chaouni. Over time, however, it became something of a closed book, open only to scholars. Now, thanks to a government initiative and a restoration led by Chaouni, one of the world's oldest libraries is accessible to both tourists and locals alike.

—Merrill Fabry

HISTORIC MAJESTY

RAFFLES EUROPEJSKI WARSAW, WARSAW

Over the past few years, Poland has quietly emerged as one of Europe's most attractive tourist destinations, thanks to its low prices, improved infrastructure and luxe new lodging options. Chief among them: the Europejski, a majestic property that began its life as a hot spot for Russian-empire intellectuals in 1857 and was recently restored by Raffles, the luxury Asian hospitality group. It reopened in June to rave reviews. *—Kaitlin Menza*

LINKING PAST AND PRESENT

TEOPANZOLCO CULTURAL CENTER, CUERNAVACA, MEXICO

In designing a performance space for Cuernavaca's future, architect Isaac Broid and design studio Productora looked to the region's history. The Teopanzolco Cultural Center's triangular forms mirror nearby Aztec pyramids to create, said Broid, a place where "contemporary cultural life establishes an ongoing dialogue with our past." *—Julia Zorthian*

A SAFER PLACE FOR SEQUOIAS

MARIPOSA GROVE, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA

Sequoias are mighty trees that can live for more than 3,000 years and grow to a height of nearly 300 ft. But they're not invincible. And the more than 1 million people who pour into Yosemite National Park's Mariposa Grove each year to appreciate their splendor also potentially damage them—mostly with car pollution and water-blocking parking lots and asphalt roads. So in a rare move, the National Park Service closed the grove in July 2015, launching a three-year, $40 million effort to rework the park and protect its sequoias. Among the changes it made: ripping out the parking lot and roads and revegetating the land, building wooden boardwalks and bridges to improve water flow, and erecting a visitors' center. In order to visit the new Mariposa Grove, which opened in June, visitors must take a shuttle from a more distant parking lot. But they can do so knowing their grandchildren may one day have the same awe-inspiring view of nature. *—Kate Rockwood*

DESIGN THAT DEFIES EXPECTATIONS

VICEROY LOS CABOS, SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO, MEXICO

A cookie-cutter hotel this is not. Originally designed by Mexican architect Miguel Ángel Aragonés and recently refreshed, the Viceroy Los Cabos resembles a series of stark white cubes that seem to float in blue reflecting pools. Elevated walkways crisscross the property, meeting at Nido ("nest" in Spanish), a latticed, nestlike structure where guests can dine on ceviche while gazing at the sea. New this year is the addition of a beachfront pool and bar. *—K.R.*

Stamba features a glass-bottomed pool and an on-site chocolatier, among other elements

CREATING A DESTINATION

STAMBA HOTEL, TBILISI, GEORGIA

Solidifying the buzz around Tbilisi as an emerging travel destination is the Stamba Hotel, which opened earlier this summer in a Soviet-era publishing house, and features a glass-bottomed rooftop pool, on-site chocolatier and an elegant casino, all set around a five-story atrium. More than 80,000 books—scattered throughout the hotel, as design elements and for actual reading—pay homage to the Stamba's history. *—Abigail Abrams*

MARIPOSA GROVE, LOUVRE ABU DHABI: GETTY IMAGES; NOMA: COURTESY NOMA

A world-class spin-off

LOUVRE ABU DHABI, ABU DHABI

Great fortunes like to associate themselves with great art, but the United Arab Emirates has mostly channeled its spectacular wealth into spectacular structures, man-made islands and signature skyscrapers, often built by migrant laborers working in dubious conditions. All that applies to the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which opened in 2017. Its larger aim, however, is as lofty as the $1 billion paid to the Paris original for the name and contents—namely, to turn Abu Dhabi into a cultural capital. It helps that the Monets and van Goghs are displayed in a Jean Nouvel–designed complex that is itself a work of art. Its signature feature: an aluminum dome

comprising 7,850 stars that do with light and shadow what palm trees do in a more traditional oasis. *—Karl Vick*

Utopia, rebooted

NOMA, COPENHAGEN

After his restaurant Noma received two Michelin stars and was named Best Restaurant in the World four times, chef René Redzepi did something extraordinary: he closed it and set out to build a new one. The Noma that reopened in February, about a mile down the road from the original, is Redzepi's version of "utopia for a restaurant"; its on-site, 65,000-sq.-ft. farm and three greenhouses enable chefs to harvest ingredients from their own backyard. As a result, tasting menus (which start at $350) feature only seasonal, local food—it's either "seafood season," "vegetable season" or "game and forest season." The dining area, a series of exquisite, light-filled rooms designed by architect Bjarke Ingels, is an added bonus. "Honestly, I think our food tastes 10% better because people love our space," Redzepi says. *—J.Z.*

Marine menagerie

CONRAD MALDIVES RANGALI ISLAND, RANGALI ISLAND, MALDIVES

This resort takes hospitality to a whole new level—below sea. Following its opening of the first transparent-walled, underwater restaurant in 2005, the Conrad is now on track to unveil an underwater residence in November. Known as Muraka ("Coral" in the local language), the $15 million, two-story hotel villa will be partially submerged more than 16 ft. below the surface of the Indian Ocean. "[Maldivians] grow up respecting the moods of the sea," says Ahmed Saleem, the resort architect. "This combined with global warming makes designers think 'outside of the box' in designing structures above and below the sea." Guests who don't want to wake up encircled by a menagerie of marine life can choose to sleep in one of two above-water bedrooms. The residence will also come with a gym, a bar, an infinity pool and an ocean-facing bathtub, all for a reported $50,000 per night. *—Casey Quackenbush*

AN OFFICE BUILDING MADE NEW

THE MURRAY, HONG KONG

In a landmark 1960s former government office building, architects Foster + Partners have transformed corporate asceticism into first-class comfort. The tower opened in January and offers 336 spacious rooms and a rooftop restaurant with panoramic views of Hong Kong's skyline and Botanical Gardens, a rare green expanse in a densely packed metropolis. *—C.Q.*

CULTURAL COMING-OF-AGE

DESIGN SOCIETY, SHENZHEN, CHINA

In the late 1970s, Shenzhen was a small town and the centerpiece of China's economic liberalization. Today it's one of the country's wealthiest cities, and this sprawling, coastal arts center symbolizes its coming-of-age. Of note is the unique collaboration with the U.K.'s Victoria and Albert Museum that sees exhibitions on the power of design, including pieces from the V&A's permanent collection, take center stage.

—Suyin Haynes

SETTING A NEW ECO STANDARD

CONSCIOUS HOTEL WESTERPARK, AMSTERDAM

Powered solely by electricity from wind energy, this boutique hotel, which opened in April, takes "eco-sexy" as its philosophy. It features paintings salvaged from museum scrap heaps and coat hangers made of recycled radiator parts. A century ago, the building housed "a company producing gas from coal," says Conscious Hotels founder Marco Lemmers. "Now we are 100% electric."

—Suyin Haynes

AN ISLAND FOR ALL

GOVERNORS ISLAND, NEW YORK CITY

It's been more than a decade since this former Coast Guard facility—a 172-acre hunk of land off the coast of Manhattan—re-opened as a public park. But it continues to evolve. In 2016 it welcomed the Hills, a tiered, man-made mound designed to offer stunning vistas (and also withstand the effects of climate change), and this summer, it launched its first "glamping" experience, allowing guests to stay overnight in luxe tents.

—Wilder Davies

A COUNTRY'S KITCHEN

LEO, BOGOTÁ

Colombian chef Leonor Espinosa has spent more than a decade creating dishes from her country that feature little-known ingredients such as corozo fruit (an açaí-like berry), leaf-cutter ants and spectacled caiman (a crocodilian reptile). As her profile has risen—last year, she won the prestigious Basque Culinary World Prize—so too has her restaurant's, which has helped establish Bogotá as a culinary destination. Her goal with Leo—which Espinosa runs alongside her daughter and sommelier, Laura Hernández Espinosa—isn't just to expose diners to Colombian fare; it's also to support the local communities that help make her dishes possible, which she does through her foundation, FUNLEO. Next up for Espinosa? "The only thing I am certain of right now is that I don't want to detach myself from the kitchen," she says. *—Alejandro de la Garza*

Cycling Through Water is part of Limburg province's plan to bolster its 1,240 miles of biking trails

Riding with nature

CYCLING THROUGH WATER, GENK, BELGIUM

Walking on water may elude most of us, but this bike trail in northern Belgium offers an experience that's almost as divine. The 212-m track, dubbed "Cycling Through Water," slices through a large pond in the De Wijers nature reserve; in the middle, it dips low enough to put riders at eye level with the water. The project, which was completed in 2016, is part of the Limburg province's efforts to bolster its 1,240 miles of biking trails. "We do not want to create more miles, we want to create better miles," says Igor Philtjens of Toerisme Limburg, the project developer. To date, Cycling Through Water has attracted more than 500,000 bikers.

—Casey Quackenbush

LEO: COURTESY LEO; CYCLING THROUGH WATER: LUC DAELEMANS; SHELDON CHALET: CHRIS BURKARD; TSUTA: COURTESY TSUTA

Preserving prehistoric art

LASCAUX INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAVE ART, VÉZÈRE VALLEY, FRANCE

In 1963, the French government closed the Lascaux cave, restricting access to some of the world's best examples of prehistoric art over concerns that carbon dioxide from visitors' breathing might damage the 20,000-year-old creations. Now, more than 50 years later, you can visit the next best thing: a near perfect $64 million replica, located right next door. The Snohetta-designed complex features some 600 prehistoric paintings and 1,000 engravings, all painstakingly re-created by a team of two dozen artists working from physical castings and advanced 3-D digital scans or the original artwork. "There were moments when I realized that I must be doing the exact gestures and movements of the prehistoric artist," one team member told NPR. "And that's when a little shiver would go down my spine." —*Kate Rockwood*

The Lascaux International Centre for Cave Art features near perfect replicas of roughly 600 prehistoric paintings and 1,000 engravings

A wilderness wonder

SHELDON CHALET, DENALI NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA

Perched on a lonely outcropping high above a glacier in Alaska's Denali National Park, Sheldon Chalet is as remote as it is luxurious. The lodge, which opened in February, is only accessible by helicopter from the town of Talkeetna. Upon arrival, guests are offered locally inspired fare prepared by the lodge's private chef—think Alaskan crab and barbecued oysters—as well as an array of guided outings in the mountainous wilderness. Among them: a rappelling adventure, a mountaineering course, crevasse exploration and a "flightseeing" plane tour of the surrounding peaks. At an elevation of 6,000 ft., the chalet also offers extraordinary views of the Northern Lights, which are brighter in the desolate wilderness. Stays start at around $2,300 per person per night, including the helicopter transport. —*A.G.*

A BOLD REINVENTION

HOTEL HENRY, BUFFALO, N.Y.

This long-neglected former psychiatric hospital, set amid extensive grounds, has been repurposed into a striking 88-room hotel that opened last year. But more is to come: the Hotel Henry is the first phase of a larger preservation effort that will eventually lead to a center for art and design. For now, guests can enjoy the Henry's modern American style and its restaurant, 100 Acres. —*W.D.*

SMART SPIRITS

DANDELYAN, LONDON

Since opening in 2014, Ryan Chetiyawardana's lounge has won praise not only for its inventive cocktails, but also for its ever-changing menus, which aim to teach patrons about the relationship between humans and plants. Its latest slate of drinks, which debuted this year, includes a rum sour infused with pigweed, alongside a cheeky write-up about how the plant can be a pest for hops growers but is a vital crop in certain parts of Africa. —*W.D.*

UNPLUGGED LUXURY

SANTANI WELLNESS RESORT & SPA, KANDY, SRI LANKA

On a former tea plantation in the mountains of Sri Lanka sits Santani, a resort to help you disconnect. There are no televisions (really) and no wi-fi included (guests can pay extra if they find they can't live without it), but there is a tri-level spa with a sauna overlooking paddy fields, open-air salt soak pool and wellness packages fusing Ayurveda, yoga and meditation.

—*C.Q.*

MICHELIN-STARRED RAMEN

TSUTA, TOKYO

Just 150 coveted bowls of noodles—the world's first Michelin-starred ramen—are served daily at this unassuming shop in Tokyo's outskirts. Customers start lining up at 6 a.m. The Tsuta brand now has seven branches across Asia, but the Tokyo shop that launched an empire still retains its hole-in-the-wall character and, as shown by the daily presence of chef Yuki Onishi, remains very much at the heart of operations. —*S.H.*

LODGING ON A LANDMARK

RETREAT AT BLUE LAGOON, ICELAND

After its economy melted down in the late 2000s, Iceland invested heavily in tourism, which may be why your Instagram feed is dotted with people dipping into the creamy alien waters of the Blue Lagoon. Now the country's most popular attraction has its own hotel, carved into an 800-year-old lava flow. It features a gourmet restaurant, a subterranean spa and 62 rooms, four of which are suites with access to private pools of the lagoon.

—Kaitlin Menza

HAUTE CUISINE WITH HUMOR

DEN, TOKYO

It's no surprise the son of a geisha should master the Japanese principle of *omotenashi,* or selfless hospitality. But don't expect stuffy formality at Zaiyu Hasegawa's Den, which recently moved to a larger location and reclaimed its second Michelin star. In Hasegawa's playful repertoire: "Dentucky" fried chicken wings in a container bearing his face and a salad with emoji-shaped carrots, hiding an edible ant or two.

—Joseph Hincks

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

THREAD, SINTHIAN, SENEGAL

There are few Senegalese towns more remote than Sinthian, which is more than seven hours from the nearest major airport in Dakar. And yet, it has recently emerged as a vibrant cultural center, luring artists, musicians and filmmakers from around the world. Their destination: the Thread, a multipurpose facility built by community members—in collaboration with architect Toshiko Mori and backed by the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation—to facilitate the exchange of art and ideas across cultures. In designing the structure, Mori eschewed her usual materials—it would cost too much to bring aluminum, steel and glass to the site—and instead took cues from local experts, who helped fashion a superstructure from bamboo and mud bricks and rig the roof to double as a rainwater collector (to aid during the dry months). The result, she says, is an iconic building that "relates to its own culture" instead of superimposing "another value on the community." *—Julia Zorthian*

A SUPERIOR SPA

OBEROI SUKHVILAS RESORT & SPA, NEW CHANDIGARH, INDIA

Sukh means *happiness* in Hindi, and this 12,000-sq.-ft. wellness center, nestled among 8,000 acres of forested Himalayan foothills, is designed to make guests feel just that. Opened in December 2017, it offers Ayurveda courses up to 21 days long, plus digital detoxes and personalized fitness programs. Once they're done with the spa, guests can wander the tranquil Siswan forest, guided by an in-house naturalist. *—Eli Meixler*

Shipwreck Lodge is the first resort to open in Namibia's Skeleton Coast National Park

SLEEPING IN A 'SHIPWRECK'

SHIPWRECK LODGE, SKELETON COAST NATIONAL PARK, NAMIBIA

With its expansive dunes and beaches, Skeleton Coast is among Namibia's most stunning natural parks. It's also among its least visited. This all-inclusive lodge, which opened in June, may change that. Its name and design pay homage to the region's reputation as a hazard for boats, thanks to its coastal fog. Once there, guests (who generally arrive via car) can take guided tours of the Namib Desert, a seal colony and more.

—Merrill Fabry

THE THREAD: IWAN BAAN: AMANYANGYUN: SUI SICONG: UNDERWATER MUSEUM OF ART: COURTESY UNDERWATER MUSEUM OF ART

An ancient forest reborn

AMANYANGYUN, SHANGHAI

When Chinese businessman Ma Dadong discovered that a forest of ancient camphor trees was to be destroyed in China's Jiangxi province, he embarked on a mission to relocate thousands of them to the outskirts of Shanghai—800 km away—where they now surround 24 Ming Dynasty–style suites and several villas at Amanyangun, which opened in January. The lodging itself also nods to the past, making use of recycled timber and brick from centuries-old homes. Facilities include a club lounge, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a spa and a variety of sumptuous dining spaces, including a 200-seat banquet hall. Calligraphy lessons and tea ceremonies are available to help

guests feel part "of this monumental story," says Roland Fasel, chief operating officer of Aman. The cost of such inner cultivation starts from around $750 per night (excluding taxes). *—Casey Quackenbush*

Art in the depths

UNDERWATER MUSEUM OF ART,
SOUTH WALTON, FLA.

Half a nautical mile from the coast of Florida's panhandle and 60 ft. below the lapping waves, an 8-ft.-tall stainless-steel pineapple reaches its spiky leaves back toward the sky. It's one of the seven sculptures placed in America's first underwater museum, which opened this summer. But the pieces are meant to do more than look pretty, says Jennifer Steele, the executive director of the Cultural Arts Alliance of Walton County (CAA). "The purpose is for them to become part of the environment, enhancing it and stimulating the ecosystem," she explains, noting that new designs will be added each year. Although visitors who want an up-close experience need be trained scuba divers—or fish themselves—it is possible to sneak a peek from the surface. CAA just asks that boats not anchor nearby; they wouldn't want you disturbing the art. *—K.M.*

A long-overdue memorial

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, MONTGOMERY, ALA.

Most public memorials exalt history. Deep in the American South, a powerful space pays homage to its victims. At a low angle, the roof of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice appears to be held up by columns. Draw closer, and it emerges that the more than 800 Corten steel slabs are in fact hanging from the ceiling. Inscribed on each is the name of a county, followed by dates and names of persons, some marked UNKNOWN. They honor approximately 4,400 black Americans who were murdered in lynchings between 1877 and 1950. The first-of-its-kind memorial was created by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), a legal advocacy group founded by Bryan Stevenson, in collaboration with MASS Design Group; EJI also runs the nearby Legacy Museum, devoted to the full gamut of America's racial history. Both sites are resonating: more than 100,000 people have visited since they opened in April. *—M.F.*

BRINGING SPACE TO SEA

VIKING *ORION*

Cruisegoers looking for an out-of-this-world experience will find one aboard the *Orion,* a new space-themed cruise ship that features a planetarium (the most advanced on an ocean ship), a collection of vintage NASA photographs and a resident astronomer, Howard Parkin, who leads lectures and stargazing sessions. The ship began its maiden season navigating the Mediterranean this summer. *—Alejandro de la Garza*

SPLASHY STAY

IL SERENO,
LAKE COMO, ITALY

The first new hotel in decades to open on the shores of Lake Como made a splash in 2016 with its clean, modern aesthetic—the work of Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola, whose custom furnishings appear throughout. Equally stylish are the sleek Riva boats that let guests zip James Bond–style across the lake and work up an appetite for Il Sereno's newly Michelin-starred restaurant Berton al Lago. *—J.H.*

THE NEW WORK-STAY

TRIBE PERTH, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

Opened last year in laid-back Western Australia, Tribe brings a taste of affordable luxury to the tech-savvy, co-working generation. The property—branded as "part collaborative workspace, part social club"—does away with perks like concierges and room service in favor of sleek design and no-fuss check-ins, with rooms starting at $120 per night.

—Suyin Haynes

LURING MILLENNIALS ABOARD

THE *A*

U by Uniworld's millennial-focused cruises nixed a 21-to-45 age limit, but they're still a far cry from sedate river tours of old. U's black-hulled ship, simply called *A*, officially debuted in April, sailing on the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers. It's "part boutique hotel, part yacht, part local hot spot," the company says. Replete with photo booth and farm-to-table cuisine, *A* docks at hip European cities for fun day excursions.

—Joseph Hincks

FANTASY ISLAND

WARNER BROS. WORLD ABU DHABI, ABU DHABI

The United Arab Emirates became home to two of the world's largest indoor theme parks when Warner Bros. World opened in July. The Abu Dhabi Yas Island park—which cost $1 billion to build and spreads across 38 acres, just a little smaller than the garden of Buckingham Palace—is designed to entertain all kinds of Warner Bros. fans and also offer them a reprieve from the region's often sweltering heat. Attractions are grouped into six "neighborhoods," including Gotham and Metropolis (from the DC Comics universe, featuring superheroes like Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman) and Dynamite Gulch and Cartoon Junction (with animated classics such as Road Runner and *Looney Tunes*). *—Gabby Raymond*

In 2017, Edouardo Jordan became the first black chef to win the James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant

Serving truth

JUNEBABY, SEATTLE

Few chefs serve food like Edouardo Jordan, whose Seattle eatery offers up soul-food staples (pulled pork, fried chicken, candied yams) while educating diners about their complex history. JuneBaby's walls are lined with artwork featuring slaves, and its website includes an "encyclopedia" of menu ingredients that explains, for example, how corn bread became popular among slaves. (It didn't require a fork and a knife.) "This is the food that fed a lot of people to build America," says Jordan, a St. Petersburg, Fla., native who last year became the first black chef to win the James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant. "We shouldn't hide that. We should embrace it."

—Ashley Hoffman

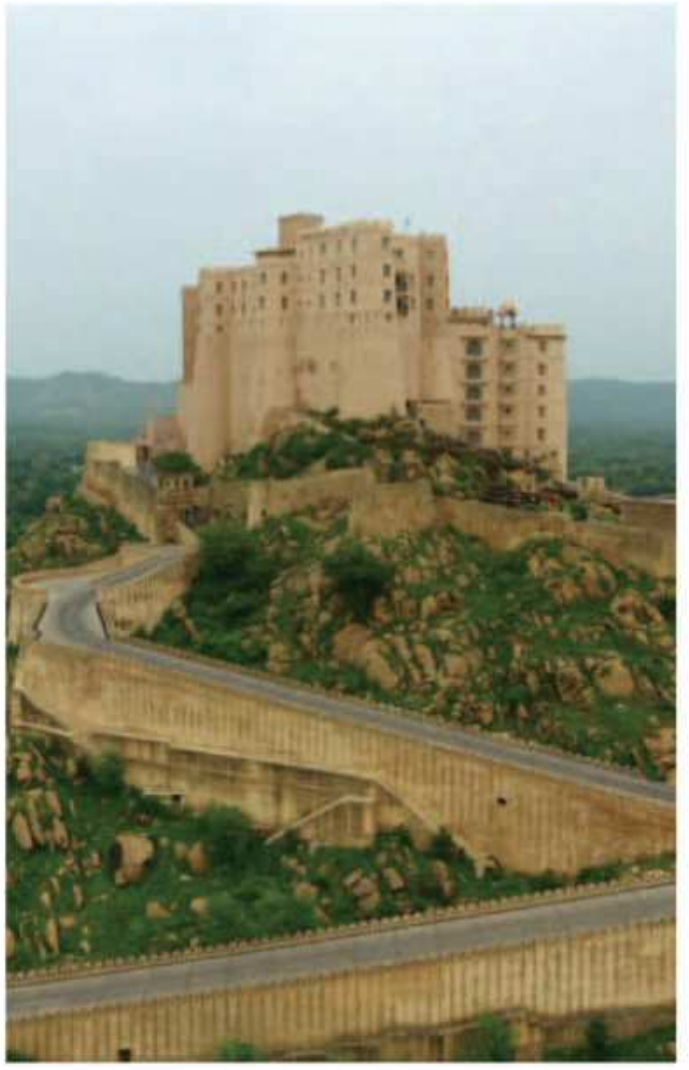
Elevating indigenous ingredients

CENTRAL, LIMA

Run by Virgilio Martínez and chef Pia León, a husband and wife duo, Central's goal, Martínez says, is to help diners "understand what we see in nature." To that end, the tasting menu travels through Peru and each course features ingredients that grow together in an ecosystem at a particular altitude: scallop and seaweed from the ocean, piranha and yuca from the Amazon, or goat and olluco (a tuber that looks like a potato) from the Andes. Diners have been wowed by the food—so much so that Central, which opened in 2008, just moved to a new location and opened several spin-offs. While the menu may at times seem overwhelming—it features some 230 ingredients, including little-known stuff like *cushuro* (a caviar-like cyanobacterium), chaco clay and yacón root—Martínez promises that guests are in good hands. "We know what to do, how to be with the unknown," he says.

—Merrill Fabry

Each course at Central features ingredients that grow together in an ecosystem at a particular altitude in Peru



Five-star fortress

ALILA FORT BISHANGARH, RAJASTHAN, INDIA

Two centuries ago, this hilltop fortress housed royalty and guarded the kingdom of Jaipur. Now, after a seven-year restoration led by the Alila Hotels and Resorts, it has been reborn as a luxury hotel—while still retaining many of its original features, such as turrets, dungeons and secret passageways. "We laid immense emphasis on detailing to take [guests] back to the era of the Mughals," says general manager Binny Sebastian. Modern amenities include several gourmet restaurants, guided tours and a state-of-the-art spa as well as a 360° view of the rolling Rajasthan landscape. Rates start at $200 per night for a Heritage room. *—S.H.*

A HIDDEN LANDMARK

TEMPLE OF MITHRAS, LONDON

Six decades after this Roman-era temple was unearthed under the streets of London—and then put on display atop a parking structure—it's back in its original home 23 ft. below what is now 12 Walbrook. That building is the European headquarters for Bloomberg, which led the relocation and helped turn the temple into an immersive exhibit, replete with sculptural light effects, sounds of Roman voices and shuffling feet, and a display of more than 600 archaeological artifacts. Admission is free, but reserving a spot is recommended. *—Alejandro de la Garza*

DELICIOUS NOSTALGIA

HAPPY PARADISE, HONG KONG

May Chow was already a rising culinary star when she opened this outpost in 2017. An homage to 1960s Hong Kong, the Formica-clad Happy Paradise twists Cantonese classics and haute cuisine. Think tea-smoked pigeon and sourdough chicken-fat waffles. "We're not afraid," she has said, "to serve whole birds or brains."

—J.H.

UNLIKELY OASIS

ZARYADYE PARK, MOSCOW

Huge public parks were a main feature of Soviet cities, central but also stately and formal—nothing like Zaryadye, Moscow's first new large-scale public park in 50 years. With a design led by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the U.S. architects behind New York City's High Line, the park features a concert hall, an ice cave and a boomerang-shaped bridge cantilevered over the Moscow River. Nearly 10 million people have visited since its September 2017 opening.

—Karl Vick

WARNER BROS. WORLD, TEMPLE OF MITHRAS: GETTY IMAGES; JUNEBABY: CHONA KASINGER—THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX; ALILA FORT BISHANGARH: COURTESY ALILA FORT BISHANGARH; NEXT PAGE: MUSEUM MACAN: COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART IN NUSANTARA

ART AMPLIFIED

MUSEUM MACAN, JAKARTA

Indonesia's famously vibrant modern-art scene finally has the home it deserves. Museum MACAN—a contraction of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara, a suburb of the Indonesian capital—sprawls over 43,000 sq. ft. and showcases local talent, such as painter and performance artist Tisna Sanjaya and woodwork specialist Gatot Indrajati, alongside international icons such as Japan's Yayoi Kusama and China's Ai Weiwei. Most of the art comes from the personal trove of Haryanto Adikoesoemo, a prominent local collector and businessman. In order to extend its remit, the facility, which opened in November 2017, also does community outreach, offering resources to teachers to talk to students about art. *—Suyin Haynes*

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Time Off

POP'S NEW STAR
A YouTuber turned hit singer, Troye Sivan leads a generation of entertainers who are proud to stand for something

INSIDE

ROMANTIC COMEDIES ARE BACK—WITH A MODERN TWIST

A SHARP NEW NOVEL EXAMINES SEXUAL ABUSE AT AN ELITE BOARDING SCHOOL

HOW DOCUMENTARIES BECAME THE HOTTEST THING AT THE MULTIPLEX

PHOTOGRAPH BY RYAN JAMES CARUTHERS FOR TIME

MUSIC

Troye Sivan is a new kind of pop icon

By Raisa Bruner

TROYE SIVAN, GLOBAL POP STAR, SHOWS UP to his photo shoot alone. No manager. No assistant. No glam squad. Just a slight 23-year-old with wide blue eyes, artfully floppy bleached-blond hair and a voice that has captured the hearts of a millions-strong fandom, spread out everywhere from his hometown in Australia to his adopted home in Los Angeles. When Sivan stretches out his hand to introduce himself, he says his name earnestly: He's Troye. He'd like you to know about him. He'd like you to like him, and his music; his new album *Bloom* is out Aug. 31. But more than anything, he'd like to be there for you.

"I just want to provide for a young audience what I felt was lacking when I was a kid," he says, "which was representation of someone living their life." When Sivan talks about representation, he's talking about representation for someone like him: queer, sensitive, thoughtful.

Sivan is different from many of the stars who have come before. But for him, that's an asset, not an impediment. His music—delicate dance-pop that has notched hundreds of millions of streams, a *Saturday Night Live* appearance and one big Top 40 hit ("Youth")—has already won him fans like *Bloom* collaborator Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift, who brought him onstage during a recent stadium tour date. Maybe it's because Sivan is more than just your average pop star. He built a platform as a digital influencer first, building connections with fans who related to his unapologetically queer identity, then used his Internet following to buoy him to stardom as a bona fide artist. And it's working: *Bloom* marks a major artistic achievement, evoking influences from the Velvet Underground to Simon & Garfunkel, all wrapped up in a sleek pop package.

Bloom *is Sivan's second full-length album, following 2015's* Blue Neighbourhood *and four EPs*

ANDREW LIPOVSKY—GETTY IMAGES

BORN IN JOHANNESBURG, Sivan and his family moved to Australia when he was 2, where he was raised in a sleepy suburb of Perth; he calls his childhood in a mostly Jewish community there "idyllic." His first music memories include watching Michael Jackson videos on VHS and knowing, even then, that singing and dancing were in his future. By age 7, he was taking voice lessons. But it was YouTube that made all the difference. He was about 12 when he started uploading videos of himself singing and sharing recorded musings. In old clips, you can already clock Sivan's preternatural connection with the camera, and his comfort in its detached gaze; he is a true digital native.

By the time he was 16, Sivan was one of Australian YouTube's most-followed accounts. He secured a manager, a role in a Hollywood film *(X-Men Origins: Wolverine)* and a devoted audience for his videos.

In a 2013 video post, Sivan came out publicly to his legion of fans, potentially jeopardizing his lifelong dream of pop stardom; he was negotiating a record contract at the time. But the risk paid off. Sivan has become a gay icon for a digital-savvy generation, with that video alone racking up more than 8 million views. Capitol Records, meanwhile, signed him—a perfect gift for the day before his 18th birthday. "I have no idea how I would have ever gotten started had it not been for the Internet," he says. To Sivan, YouTube and social-media platforms aren't just tools used for publicity. They're the medium, and his life is the message.

Sivan credits the friends he found online with helping him become comfortable with his identity early on. "I owed it to the community to tell my story and help some other people in the process," he says. When he first shared music videos for his 2015 debut album, *Blue Neighbourhood,* critics buzzed

about his casual embrace of same-sex romance. It wasn't a gimmick, though; it was just Sivan as Sivan, which the fans were happy to support.

That story continues in his latest additions to his YouTube canon: bold, sensual music videos to go along with the singles on *Bloom* that are rich with artful, gender-blurring visuals. In the videos, Sivan sports red lacquered lips, reclines in high fashion and dances in high heels. To him, filming those moments was a peak: "This is what you wanted your entire life," he says he told himself. "I had a bit of envy in how confident he was in his queerness," says Sivan's *Bloom* co-writer Brett McLaughlin, who performs under the name Leland. "I was like, This is what I want to be a part of. This is the train I want to be on." The response to the visuals, Sivan says, "felt electric."

SIVAN ISN'T THE FIRST male pop star to identify as openly queer or defy gender norms; award-winning artists like David Bowie, Elton John and Sam Smith already broke through those barriers. Nor is he the first to pivot from his fame on a digital platform to a more traditional celebrity career. Consider Justin Bieber or Shawn Mendes, both of whom got their start uploading videos as well. But his seamless transition from YouTube vlogger to actor to major-league pop star, using his fan base to test the boundaries of what's expected from male artists, is a case study in the form. Instead of being introduced to Sivan through his music, fans became familiar with him over a decade of online interaction. They've tracked him from project to project, growing with him. Their support transcends the strength of any one song, and they've given him implicit permission to express himself authentically. It's a uniquely modern experience of stardom, and it sets Sivan apart.

"It's all a part of the story," says McLaughlin. "I don't think it makes Troye any less powerful in terms of his music. It just adds accessibility." Luckily, Sivan's viral start led to a well-received debut album with a platinum hit, granting him credibility in the music industry.

On *Bloom,* Sivan continues his musical evolution, pairing effervescent dance anthems like lead single "My My My!" with more dreamy, introspective fare; he calls this album a "time capsule" of the past few years. "The Good Side," a melancholy acoustic number, was made by indie producer Ariel Rechtshaid (Haim, Kelela) and earned Sivan comparisons to indie-folk stalwart Sufjan Stevens. On dancier numbers, like the slow-burning "Plum," breathy Grande duet "Dance to This" and flirty title track, he sets off little sparks of joy among the cool-toned soundscapes. And on the lush album highlight "Seventeen," Sivan reflects on a formative but complicated romantic experience: "Maybe a little too young, but it was real to me," he sings.

'What do pop stars do? They write love songs ... I don't see it as some radical statement.'

TROYE SIVAN

Radical transparency like this is unusual in the highest echelons of pop stardom, but it's important to Sivan to be honest about his own experiences. On *Bloom,* he flips from documenting explicitly queer narratives to using gender-neutral pronouns. He says he grew up feeling accepted in his queer identity, and it was important to him to make music that felt equally non-judgmental. "I wanted to be a pop star since I was a little kid," he says. "What do pop stars do? They write love songs. They put love interests in their videos. I don't see it as some radical statement."

He wants fans to feel connected with the causes that matter to him too. Sivan teamed up with LGBTQ organizations including the Ally Coalition and the Trevor Project to promote local activism while he's on his upcoming tour. He also appears alongside Lucas Hedges and Nicole Kidman in the upcoming film *Boy Erased,* out this November, about a young man who lands in conversion therapy. He's cautious when he talks about his need to be a role model in the LGBTQ community: "This is a responsibility that I take really seriously."

If staying poised and apolitical used to be the savviest move for stars who wanted to play to the largest possible audience, Sivan represents a new kind of celebrity, who's comfortable engaging with social issues and getting vulnerable with fans. He and his contemporaries are eager to be seen and valued as role models and friends to a generation growing up in uncertain times while seeking new modes of connection with one another and the world. And Sivan knows that his popularity creates more space for people who look and act like him. "There's a lot of hunky straight white male pop stars," Sivan says, "but I think we're heading in the right direction."

Back at the photo shoot, Sivan strikes pose after pose, awash in warm morning light. He may stand alone in the camera's flash, but whatever he does, he knows his fans will follow. ☐

FICTION

The danger of being the favorite

By Lucy Feldman

OF ALL THE LESSONS GLEANED FROM #MeToo, one stands out as particularly sinister: before things turn treacherous, there's a moment when predation can feel dangerously like kindness. A young person, not yet aware of his or her power, is made to feel special—and then it's too late. Kate Walbert, author of *His Favorites,* understands this.

Jo is 15 years old and new at Hawthorne, the upper-crust boarding school where she has transferred in the wake of a personal tragedy. Her best friend is gone. Her parents are separating. Nothing is right. Along comes Master Aikens, the magnetic English teacher whose modern-lit class is so popular, it requires an application. Master spots Jo and invites her to apply. She's only a sophomore—too young—but he makes exceptions, he says.

"This was the first time a man had spoken to me so directly," Jo thinks. "A man with . . . a way of looking as if anything I said he could not only understand but somehow make more sense of, righting all the shattered objects back on the shelf." This is the moment, Jo explains, that she'd like to flatten into a film strip and watch burn to ashes—to erase from her history. Because soon after, there is the "academic" meeting in Master's apartment. Next, the handwritten note slipped under her dorm-room door. Then, the first rape.

Walbert, a National Book Award finalist and author of the best-selling *A Short History of Women,* sets Jo's experiences with Master in the late '70s—the same decade the author attended a prestigious boarding school. But Jo narrates from the present, occasionally breaking the fourth wall to speak directly to *you*—the person who has asked to hear this story.

And so we have. Over the past year, we've heard an overwhelming number of stories of sexual mistreatment. Walbert's is surely just one of many novels that will come to grapple with #MeToo, but it begs to be read. In just 149 efficient pages, she urges us to remember that sharing—and listening—are only the first steps toward righting a culture. For Jo, the past is a "cool, dark pond," and her feet will always be damp. Adult Jo has learned, just as we have learned, that she's far from alone—and there's work to be done. ◻

Walbert's latest novel wrestles with timely #MeToo themes

FICTION

Silence of the women

In Margaret Atwood's 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale,* the government strips women of their resources. In Christina Dalcher's *Vox,* a debut already earning comparisons to Atwood's classic, a new law strips women of their right to self-expression. If women speak more than 100 words in a day in this near future America, they get shocked via bracelets. When the president recruits Jean, a neurolinguist, to cure a brain injury that left his brother speechless, she finds herself fighting for her own voice, her daughter's voice and the voices of all women.

Dalcher is a propulsive storyteller, and she knows how to keep the reader outraged. But she's also herself a linguist, so she's careful to explain the importance of speech, both the neurological mechanisms behind its functioning and how psychologically terrifying it can be to lose those faculties. That powerlessness also works as a metaphor for our time. Dalcher's heroine serves as a cautionary tale to the reader: after all, Jean was warned of the coming ills and did nothing. *Vox* is a strong reminder to speak up before it's too late.

—Julia Zorthian

NONFICTION

Parenting is not the boss of you

By Belinda Luscombe

Two new books examine why parenting is not nearly as fun as it should be

"MY LIFE HAS MANY MISFORtunes," wrote French philosopher Michel de Montaigne in the 16th century, "most of which never happened." Not coincidentally, Montaigne is also considered the father of the personal essay, which has these 500 years later begotten a populous line of literature: the parenting memoir in which nothing terribly bad happens.

The newest arrival in this family is Kim Brooks' *Small Animals: Parenting in the Age of Fear.* The misfortune that befell Brooks was that when she left her 4-year-old son in a perfectly safe and cool car to run into Target for less than 10 minutes, someone reported it to the police, and a warrant was put out for her arrest. Nasty, but not life-threatening. She wrote an essay in 2014 that went viral about how impossibly judgy parenting has become, and received, for her troubles, a whole lot more judgment.

Small Animals attempts to assess how modern American parenthood has become synonymous with fear and has "made people worse, or at least, worse to each other." Brooks arrives at many possible answers. Perhaps it's because raising children is a much more intensive and intentional activity now than it has been. Or because the media play up stories of the calamities that parents visit upon children (and readers devour them), so people are more apt to think kids are perpetually in danger. Maybe America's disavowal of state-sponsored child care is to blame, because it often puts parents, particularly mothers, in an impossible squeeze. No matter which is true, with ever present cameras and social media, what was once a domestic matter is now very public.

The result is that parents live in fear of being shamed—even highly educated, straight, white parents like Brooks, who are afforded the benefit of the doubt in a way low-income and minority parents are not. And it changes how they behave.

IT'S ALL GREAT STUFF for an essay, with the perfect Montaigne level of narrowly averted misfortune. As a book, however, it's strangely thin. Brooks seems to lack confidence not just in her (perfectly valid) parenting decisions but also in her own sprightly voice, and she quotes long and tedious passages from experts, friends and social-media acquaintances. Parents, time-poor as they are, have scant need for a book-length recitation of the ways in which child rearing blows.

The confidence that seems to have been shaken out of Brooks and her peers might possibly be restored by KJ Dell'Antonia's cheerful, practical *How to Be a Happier Parent*. Dell'Antonia worked the parenting beat for the New York *Times* while raising four children on a New Hampshire horse farm, which may explain her pragmatic outlook.

She identifies the main challenges of parenting (not including judgment) and deals with each, one at a time: mornings, discipline, chores, sibling fights, screens and so on. She explains why each dilemma is worse today and then offers realistic, often research-backed nuggets on how to reduce the misery. Mornings are better if you get to bed earlier. Chores will get done if you're consistent and don't expect to be liked. Being a good parent doesn't require intervening in every sibling scrap. One of her mantras: "You don't have to go in there." None of her ideas is revolutionary, but her cheerful assurance that these issues are surmountable and that parents are up to the task is like a restorative drink of fresh water in a sea of misery. So many parenting memoirs read like an employee whining about the boss; *Happier Parent* reads like a CEO who rolls up her sleeves and says, "Which problem's next?"

Americans are not likely to give up judging fellow Americans for their parenting anytime soon. But with a little confidence, you can graciously ignore them. You don't have to go in there. ☐

RBG, *one of this summer's knockout documentaries, chronicles the adventures of another kind of superhero: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

MOVIES

The summer of the doc

By Stephanie Zacharek

AH, SUMMER! THE SEASON OF SUPERHERO BLOCKBUSTERS and exhilarating action movies, enterprises that demand little more of us than shutting down some of our brain power and sinking into cushy stadium seats. But the summer of 2018 has put a wrinkle in that pattern. We're in the midst of a mini documentary boom, during a season in which a surprising number of people have made the effort to go out to the movies—to see a *nonfiction* film. Since its June release, Morgan Neville's documentary portrait of beloved TV personality and children's advocate Fred Rogers, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?,* has grossed $22 million at the box office. Two other docs—Julie Cohen and Betsy West's homage to Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, *RBG,* released in May, and Tim Wardle's potent and unsettling adoption saga, *Three Identical Strangers,* which opened in June—have also hit big at the box office, grossing some $13.7 million and $10 million, respectively.

Those figures are nothing close to what huge hits like *Black Panther* or *Avengers: Infinity War* have raked in. But they're still surprising. Think of it this way: All three of these docs have already cracked the list of top 30 highest-grossing documentaries since 1982—and they've been in theaters for only three or four months. (The top-grossing doc since 1982, according to Box Office Mojo, is Michael Moore's 2004 *Fahrenheit 9/11,* which has made $119 million to date.)

It's too soon to tell if this current love affair with documentaries is the beginning of a trend or simply a testament to the quality of these three films. But sometimes numbers tell a story that has less to do with profit statistics than with an almost indescribable state of yearning: What if this summer's big documentaries—and a few others that aren't as splashy but are still worth your time—are giving audiences something they didn't know they needed? At a time when the press is under constant attack and many of our government leaders operate under a rather elastic definition of the truth, maybe audiences are looking to connect with stories they can truly believe in.

THE RISE OF documentary films may run on a parallel track with the recent popularity of true-crime podcasts. Of the new doc crop, *Three Identical Strangers* is most similar to a whodunit. It may not be a true-crime story, but it *is* a tragic mystery with a sinister twist. Director Wardle tells the story of Eddy Galland, David Kellman and Bobby Shafran, triplets who were separated at birth in the early 1960s and adopted by three different families. The trio found one another, almost miraculously, in the early 1980s and enjoyed a brief run as minor celebrities—until certain facts about their adoption disrupted the fairy tale. The picture asks some teasing questions about nature vs. nurture, and it's as suspenseful as any fiction that a screenwriter could dream up.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? strikes a different chord. As the world looks today, it's a wonder that a man like

RBG: MAGNOLIA PICTURES; CAR, RAMEN: GETTY IMAGES

Rogers, so generous and so concerned with the welfare of others—particularly children—could ever have existed. He's one of those rare people who demonstrably left the world a better place. Little wonder people leave this movie feeling at least a little better too.

RBG seems to have a similar galvanizing effect on audiences by parting the curtain on Ginsburg, a rather private figure who has recently become a hero to young women. It also makes the case, subtly, for bipartisan unity. Ginsburg and her late Supreme Court colleague Antonin Scalia disagreed vehemently on judicial issues, but clearly had a blast hanging out. One of this doc's signature visuals is a photograph of the two of them in India, waving and smiling while perched on an elephant.

Summer 2018 has also graced us with *McQueen,* Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui's moving portrait of the late designer Alexander McQueen; *The King,* from Eugene Jarecki, a bracing essay film linking the rise and fall of Elvis Presley with America's own ups and downs; and Wim Wenders' *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word,* about a man who, in the vein of Rogers, stands strong against the cruelty and thoughtlessness that tears at the fabric of our world.

Streaming services are part of this documentary groundswell too. Netflix has long been a platform for viewers to catch up with documentaries they may have missed in theaters. But the service also produces documentaries of its own, like the recent *Recovery Boys,* focusing on four men struggling to overcome opioid abuse. And when it comes to one of the loveliest, most wrenching documentaries of this summer, you have a choice: *Minding the Gap,* the debut film from director Bing Liu, is playing in theaters—but you can also watch it on Hulu. Set in the Rust Belt city of Rockford, Ill., the film tells the story of three young skateboarders, one of whom is Bing himself, from adolescence to adulthood. This gorgeous film, a snapshot of what it's like to be young in a forgotten corner of today's America, deserves to be seen big, but in a pinch your television or laptop will do. The most human stories always feel big, even if the pictures have gotten smaller. □

POP CHART

TIME'S WEEKLY TAKE ON WHAT POPPED IN CULTURE

Aston Martin is **producing 25 re-creations of the 1964 DB5 driven by Sean Connery in the James Bond film *Goldfinger*** that will sport the car's famous revolving license plate as well as other spy gadgets.

LOVE IT

LEAVE IT

Police in Georgia are investigating the **theft of a trailer filled with nearly $100,000 worth of ramen noodles.**

Crime drama *Billionaire Boys Club,* the first movie to feature Kevin Spacey since multiple people accused him of sexual misconduct, **earned just $618 from a total of 11 theaters** in its opening weekend.

MOVIES

Three splashy summer films refresh the romantic comedy

By Eliana Dockterman

ROMANTIC COMEDIES GET A BAD rap. It's never been the most progressive genre—how many times have we watched a hero save the damsel, or a high-powered executive flirt with his secretary? And the odds are stacked against the rom-com: box-office grosses are down; audiences are increasingly wrestling with traditional gender dynamics; and there's a persistent belief in Hollywood that women, the genre's target demo, will enthusiastically go see superhero movies, but men have to be dragged kicking and screaming to romantic comedies.

And yet, slowly but surely, the rom-com is making a comeback. And the film industry is starting to get it right. A few of this summer's most enjoyable movies—the Nick Hornby adaptation *Juliet, Naked;* the box-office smash *Crazy Rich Asians;* and the sleeper Netflix hit *Set It Up*—attempt to resolve the tension between what we emotionally need and what we intellectually know is best. All three movies refocus on what women want—beyond a man—and celebrate equal partnerships.

ROM-COMS ARE TYPICALLY the playground of 20-somethings, but *Juliet, Naked* doesn't shy away from the problems that come with growing up. Ethan Hawke's aging musician Tucker Crowe is a mess, juggling a handful of exes and even more children. Crowe's haplessness might have been charming in his 20s, but at this stage, his love interest Annie (Rose Byrne) is contemplating having a baby on her own and is wary of getting mixed up with a man-child.

Set It Up similarly presents female protagonists with modern priorities. Two personal assistants

SET IT UP: NETFLIX

Diggs and Liu star as bad bosses who fall in love in Netflix's Set It Up

(Zoey Deutch and Glen Powell) conspire to set up their workaholic bosses (Lucy Liu and Taye Diggs)—and lighten their own workload in the process. Liu's Kirsten is a demanding editor who yells for pitches through a bullhorn. At one point she lectures her assistant on the perks of being picky: "I could be thrice divorced by now." Another film might cast her as desperate. But she teaches her assistant to reap the benefits of putting ambition before love.

Then there's *Crazy Rich Asians,* which, at first blush, looks like an opulent Cinderella story. A professor named Rachel (Constance Wu) stands to secure a life of luxury if she marries her überrich boyfriend Nick (Henry Golding). But her career ambitions stand in the way: Nick's mother would prefer that Rachel give up her job so Nick can return home to run the family business. Rachel refuses to compromise who she is—even for love.

These films don't get everything right. *Juliet, Naked* can portray women as baby-crazy. *Crazy Rich Asians* still culminates with a giant engagement ring. And *Set It Up* has a retrograde counterpart on Netflix: *The Kissing Booth.* That movie centers on a romance between two teens: a possessive guy with anger-management issues and an insecure girl who's constantly being slut-shamed—including by her school principal. The girl tries to tame the boy, and he lures her onto his motorcycle. Netflix doesn't release viewership numbers, but its execs say *The Kissing Booth* is a massive hit. Its popularity speaks to a desire, even among today's progressive teens, to watch a good girl break the rules for an infatuated boy—like leather-clad Sandy smoking a cigarette at the end of 1978's *Grease.*

THERE'S A REASON we're addicted to these toxic clichés. Who wouldn't want a boyfriend willing to run after them through an airport, especially in an era when people can find another potential partner with just one swipe?

But movies like *Set It Up* should remind writers that a better formula exists. The best romances, modeled on Jane Austen's classic *Pride and Prejudice,* empower women: two equals argue with each other until they overcome their respective egos and fall in love. Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn built careers on this model, and nobody ever doubted Hepburn's power. Great films like *His Girl Friday* and *When Harry Met Sally* share this DNA. The couple's bickering serves as necessary tension to move the plot forward, and the heroines are considered attractive because of their opinions—not despite them. That is a worthy idea, even if the execution isn't always perfect. But then again, no one ever said love was easy. ☐

9 Questions

Jason Bateman The *Ozark* star talks Season 2, taking the helm as a director and why he's listening more

The men you play on both *Arrested Development* and *Ozark* are unassuming guys who get embroiled in intense situations. Are you drawn to characters like this? I like to be a proxy for the audience—that's a necessary component in a drama or a comedy. I like the responsibility of that. It's not the funny part in a comedy, and in a drama, it's not the scary part—I'm usually the person reacting to the funny or running from the scary.

Ozark details class divisions and economic inequality. How did you consider those issues in the show? A family—the Byrdes—comes down to the center of the country and thinks they can dominate and manipulate. They underestimate the savviness of the locals, and they're still kind of paying that bill. The rude awakening they find themselves in is something that would be familiar to a lot of what our country realized a couple of years ago.

Marty Byrde shares similarities with classic TV antiheroes like Walter White. Do you feel sympathy for him? I do, yeah. Anybody who overestimates their intelligence and overplays their hand of ambition deserves sympathy and empathy as long as they're trying to mend those mistakes. He is. There's some regret and some shame and some moments of contrition that he and his wife go through. They tried to cut a corner when they got into this big mess. Now they're trying to get out of it and get back to the "boring life."

Have you visited the Ozarks? We shot there for the first and second episodes. Certainly, the Lake of the Ozarks is not a cool type of palette—it's a very sunny, hot place, famous for its recreation. What was interesting to me about the story and these people is what's happening behind that lake economy. What's going on behind the shack that rents the boats? What's going on behind the liquor store? What's going on in the homes, apartments, trailers—the people who service the vacation homes?

"I'M USUALLY THE PERSON REACTING TO THE FUNNY OR RUNNING FROM THE SCARY"

GABRIEL OLSEN—GETTY IMAGES

You earned two Emmy nominations for *Ozark*, one for acting and one for directing. After having acted for so long, what do you enjoy about directing? With this type of project, you can't be over-reliant on one particular element. It's a world and a story line that lends itself to many different departments that a director can utilize—it's not something that is going to win if there are a bunch of jokes in it or win if there are a bunch of cool effects. It can succeed only if every department is doing a tasteful and subtle job.

You've returned to *Arrested Development* twice. What's changed as you revisit the show? Not much—it's great being with that bunch and working with characters that we love.

Are you open to doing another season? I would always be open to working with everybody and anybody associated with that show.

Back in May, you apologized to Jessica Walter amid criticism that you had minimized her feelings in an interview after a bad on-set experience with Jeffrey Tambor. How did that make you rethink how people should treat each other in the workplace? I have always thought it's important for people to treat one another with respect at work, no matter what industry you're in. The whole experience has allowed me to do a lot of listening, and I continue that to this day.

What do you want to do next that you haven't already done? I just hope I continue to get chances to challenge myself to the edge of what I can handle. That's fun. —MAHITA GAJANAN

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